

THE CLOSET ROMANTIC: ANNE LISTER'S USE OF AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO
BRITISH ROMANTICISM

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THE CLOSET ROMANTIC: ANNE LISTER'S USE OF AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO
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DEDICATION

For Jasmine, who never gave up on me, even when I did. We made it.

ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I explore Anne Lister as a Romantic writer. While much criticism has focused on Lister's place in queer history, comparatively little has examined her writing itself. Thus, this thesis aims to place Lister's writings within popular Romantic genres and in conversation with other Romantic writers. Chapter I is an introduction to Anne Lister and the scholarship that has surrounded her since the first collection of her diaries was published in the 1980s and establishes the arguments that will be made in each chapter. In Chapter II, I examine how Lister uses Romantic works and their writers to construct her own personal identity despite her lack of participation in either the written tradition or in the major social movements of the period during her lifetime. This is done through comparing Lister specifically to Lord Byron and examining the ways in which Romantic ideas inspired both Lister's identity and writing style. In Chapter III, I theorize that Lister's relationship with later Romanticism mirrors that of the Ladies of Llangollen to early Romantic writers as she is often linked directly to Emily Brontë and her characters. This is done by examining the construction of queer communities among women in a period in which they were largely undefined and the chain of connection between the Ladies of Llangollen, Anne Lister, and Emily Brontë. In Chapter IV, I argue that Lister's writing contributes significantly to the study of Romanticism by offering a new approach to life and travel writing within the period through her queering of the genres and styles of British Romanticism. When she is placed within the traditions in which she was writing, Lister not only follows specific tropes of the genres but expands

upon them through her use of subjectivity and movement between gendered styles of writing. This thesis concludes that Anne Lister serves as an example of Romantic literature's sway within British culture and the ways in which those who were not directly associated with the literary movement still contributed to it through a variety of perspectives that have often been ignored and dismissed within scholarship.

KEY WORDS: Anne Lister; Romanticism; Queer theory; Masculinity; Femininity; Gender performance; Homosexuality; Lesbianism; Nineteenth century; Travel writing; Life-writing; Diaries; Autobiography; Lord Byron; *Don Juan*; *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*; Ladies of Llangollen; Emily Brontë; *Wuthering Heights*.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In the mid-1890s, the name and image of Anne Lister were nearly erased from history. From her early teenage years until her death in 1840, Anne religiously recorded her days in a series of diaries with entries ranging from poetic to painstakingly detailed. A large portion of these entries were coded in a shorthand Anne and a prior classmate had devised during their school years, and this code offered her a barrier behind which she was able to hide her private thoughts, memories, and identities. This barrier began to crack, however, shortly after her death when a young Dr. John Lister, her distant relative, arrived at their ancestral estate of Shibden Hall in Halifax, West Yorkshire, and became fascinated with the coded sections. Several years after his arrival, he and his friend, Arthur Burrell, began to decipher the coded sections of Anne's writing with nothing but the keyword "hope" found on a slip of paper on which Anne had copied a Bible verse in her code. When the two men finished decoding a single volume of Anne's diaries, they both concluded that it was "entirely unpublishable" as it contained "an intimate account of homosexual practices among Miss Lister and her many 'friends'" (Steidele 9). Both of the men were horrified by the entries, the majority of which contained explicit details of sexual encounters as well as a plethora of Anne's personal euphemisms, and Burrell advised John to burn the entire collection to protect the family from the stain of not just homosexual practices but of Anne's pride in her lesbian identity. However, John refused and instead hid the diaries and his notes on the code in what would have been Anne's

study and concealed the room behind a false wall.¹ A few years after the estate was purchased by the city of Halifax as a historic site in the 1930s, the room and its contents were rediscovered, and the ongoing process of translating and publishing the diaries began with two historians, Helena Whitbread and Jill Liddington, in the 1980s.

Anne Lister was born in Halifax, West Yorkshire on 3 April 1791 to Jeremy and Rebecca Lister. She was the second of six children, but only she and her younger sister Marian lived past the age of twenty. Halifax, at the time, was a market and mill town thirty miles northeast of Manchester, and the Listers were a well-established gentry class family within the community. Though the family was small by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century standards, the Listers had owned the Shibden half estate for almost two hundred years, and though the heads of the estate did not participate in the growing industrial economy, Shibden still contained a significant amount of land in the community. After first attending a local girls' school beginning at the age of seven and then receiving three years of private tutoring at home during which time she began her life-long quest for education, Anne Lister was sent to an all-girls boarding school in York in 1804. Unlike most girls in the early nineteenth century, Lister received a well-rounded education that included reading, writing, geometry, and geography, among other skills she learned herself following her formal education (Liddington, *Female Fortune* 11). Throughout the rest of her life, Lister was a staunch believer in offering girls full educations like her own, writing in a letter to a friend with a daughter, "It is observed by Gibbon that a man has two educations, one that is given to him, one that he gets himself.

¹ It has been theorized that John Lister was also homosexual and that part of his refusal to destroy the diaries was motivated by his shared experiences and hope that the diaries would one day be acceptable. However, his justification at the time was that, as a casual historian, he refused to destroy historical documents.

How far this may be the case with ladies [...] but I have seen from very any examples that it is impossible for girls to have been at what are called the best schools in England” (qtd. in Green 83). Lister believed deeply in the pursuit of education throughout one’s life, and her diaries often recount her intense self-education process that included private tutoring in multiple languages, a vast library filled with travel and science books, and regular seminar attendance.

Lister’s second boarding school experience, however, was more notable than her previous as it was at the Manor School that she met Eliza Raine. She and Raine eventually began a secret relationship that spurred them to create the code that Lister would come to use throughout her diaries. For unspecified reasons, Lister was removed from the boarding school, but the two remained close well into their adult lives. Shortly after finishing school, Lister moved to Shibden Hall in 1815 where she lived with her aunt Anne and uncle James. Lister’s reasons for leaving her immediate family were two-fold. On a practical level, she saw an opportunity. Two years earlier, her brother Samuel, with whom she had been the closest of her siblings, had drowned at the age of twenty. Samuel had been that last male Lister of Anne’s generation, meaning that there was no clear heir to the Shibden estate aside from Anne, the eldest of her surviving siblings. While her uncle would not have normally allowed the estate to be controlled by a woman, Anne Lister’s open admission that she would never marry a man convinced him that the estate would be protected. Lister confirms this in her diary shortly after he agrees to make her heir, saying that he had “no high opinion of ladies—was not fond of leaving the estate to females. Were I other than I am, would not leave his to me” (qtd. in Liddington, *Female Fortune* 19). On a more personal level, Lister’s relationships with

her immediate family were strained. Her mother was often frustrated by Lister's unwillingness to conform to feminine roles and had a noted drinking problem (Steidele 14, 67). Her father had been injured fighting in the American War, and upon moving home, he squandered the small fortune his estate held, and Lister quickly lost respect for him (46). Lister also had a very low opinion of her younger sister, Marian, and saw her as a dimwitted idealist, writing in an 1822 entry, "*How much she is like my mother & my uncle would not trust her further than he could [throw?] her. I said she could never throw away the estate for I should only leave it her for life, that whether she married or not, Listers in Wales would get it*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 234).² In addition to her disagreements with her immediate family, Lister was also very close with her aunt, Anne, and often wrote and visited her at Shibden as a child, and so the opportunity to live with her full-time instead of with her family was a great appeal.

Though there are scattered diary entries from as early as 1806, it is at Shibden that Anne Lister dedicated herself to keeping her collection of diaries. Over the next two and a half decades, Lister wrote her diaries which exceed three million words and detail her gradual inheritance of the Shibden estate, beginning with taking responsibility of tenants' rents and reopening the estate's coal pits. In 1826, her uncle died, and Lister took over full responsibility of the estate, splitting the assets of the estate with her aunt until her death in 1836 when Lister fully inherited the estate. During this period in which Lister was controlling the estate, she was seeking a wife with whom she could share her life and growing fortune. Her long-time lover Marianna had married a man a few years earlier, leaving Lister alone and heartbroken, and for several years, Lister had a string of short-

² In transcriptions of Lister's diaries, italicization is used to indicate when she is writing in code and the same is used in this manuscript unless otherwise specified.

lived affairs. In the early 1830s, Lister reunited with and began courting the local heiress, Ann Walker. After a few tumultuous years in which Walker struggled with multiple health issues and pressures from her family, the two exchanged rings and took the sacraments together to symbolize their marriage in 1834. Following their marriage, they continued Lister's avid travels through England, Europe, and Russia for the last six years of Lister's life. During their final trip to Russia, Lister contracted a fever and died, leaving Walker to have her body returned to England where she was buried on the Shibden estate.

Before Liddington and Whitbread began publishing large portions of Lister's diaries, there had been minor publications of the non-coded sections of Lister's diaries and the events they detailed, particularly those which contained her accounts of her numerous travels across Europe. John Lister himself would occasionally publish minor selections that detailed local historical events in the Halifax paper. Vivien Ingham published at least two edited versions of Lister's accounts in the 1960s, the first being Lister's ascent of Vignemale and the second her travels through the Pyrenees. Local newspapers occasionally quoted her surviving letters, despite the large swathes of her personal life that were hidden behind her code, as she remained a unique and enigmatic figure of local history and was often referred to as Gentleman Jack. When Whitbread's first volume of the Lister diaries was released in 1988, it brought with it a new, comparatively unedited view into the life and loves of Lister at a moment in which queer studies were desperate for such detailed and uncensored historical perspectives (Colclough 160). Though the collection is only a selection of eight years out of the thirty-five years that she kept a diary, it is a detailed view of nineteenth-century life as a lesbian

before the very concept was widely recognized within British culture, and for many years, it was this queer history perspective that dominated the discussion surrounding Lister's work as historians used it to reconstruct the historical contexts of queer women in the period.

Alongside its look into queer life of the nineteenth century, Lister's work has also been thoroughly examined for its rich historical insight. As an upper-class land-owning woman, Lister was privy to the political workings of northern England and the social shifts that began in her early adulthood, such as the Peterloo Massacre and the tensions between working and upper classes that led to the massacre and its lasting consequences. Later in the 1830s, Lister details how she and her wife, Ann Walker, actively solicited votes from their tenants for the Tory party, and the diaries from this period are explored by Jill Liddington in her third collection of Lister's diaries, *Female Fortune: Land, Gender and Authority*. Unlike many other similar surviving texts from the region at the time, Lister's diaries offer a bridge between her strict Tory political leanings and sympathies with radical liberal reforms, and many entries show her struggle to balance her beliefs with the pressures of her unique situation within her community as someone who benefited from conservative politics and was also at social risk from conservative ideals. One of these moments comes after the Peterloo Massacre, an event that horrified her despite her dismissal of the reasons for the protest. Lister described one man with whom she discussed the events as "evidently accustomed to read papers of an anti-ministerial turn – talks of taxation without representation and all the cant of the day" (Liddington, *Presenting the Past*). In this interaction and others like it, Lister shows a notable balance between describing others' beliefs and her own as well as a willingness

to expose her politics to criticism. In addition to her political discussions, her exhaustive examinations of her social circles, and the details of how she learned to navigate them give insight into the intersection of class and gender within her lifetime and the means by which women were able to negotiate with strict social expectations. For example, she often discusses how the expectation to marry was often brought up in conversations and how she navigated herself out of the conversation. One of these moments shows her explicitly saying that she “*very much preferred ladies to gentlemen*” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 91). These moments show both Lister’s relative openness about her queerness as well the lines that she would approach but never cross in her social circles, despite the power and wealth she accrued throughout her lifetime.

However, among this extensive scholarship on the historical perspectives Lister’s diaries offer, comparatively little has explored her writing itself. Though there is no evidence that she ever published any of her work during her lifetime, her letters and diary entries show that she did have hopes to write and publish, but often destroyed her work before it could be read. Despite her lack of publications, however, Lister and her writing are deeply rooted within the literature of British Romanticism in everything from how she constructed her identity to the ways in which she used and adapted Romantic styles of writing throughout her diaries, letters, and travel writings. It is this connection between Lister and Romanticism that this thesis aims to examine by expanding on previous research into Lister’s use of Romanticism and exploring the ways in which she contributed to the period through both the persona she built around its ideals and her writing itself.

It must be stressed before this study begins that only a small portion of Anne Lister's writings are available to be read by the public. Lister's collection of writing is vast, and the majority of that collection is held by the West Yorkshire Archive. While the public is welcome to view the diaries and letters in person, access was limited during the pandemic and digital copies must be purchased. Complicating the process further is the fact that roughly a quarter of all of her writings are coded. There is a volunteer group working with the archive to decode Lister's diaries, but these decoded sections are not released publicly. For these reasons, this thesis only deals with portions of Lister's writings that have been published and thus discusses the years from which these collections are taken more than other periods of Lister's life. The primary collections cited in this thesis are those of Helena Whitbread who has published two collections from Lister's diaries. The first spans from 1816 to 1824 and the second focuses on Lister's extended stay in France in 1826. Additionally, I have examined collections published by Jill Liddington, Patricia Hughes, and Muriel Green. Jill Liddington's three collections pull selected diaries from throughout her life with *Female Fortune* focusing on 1836 and *Nature's Domain* focusing on 1832. Patricia Hughes has also published small collections from earlier in Lister's life, and Muriel Green's collection of Lister's letters span her adulthood. These combined publications make up only a small portion of Lister's writing, but as they span throughout her lifetime, this thesis assumes that they offer a sufficient sample of Lister's entire collection.

In order to properly evaluate Lister's writings, her historical contexts and influences must be explored, and one of the most important of those histories is that of sexuality in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The history of male

sexuality, including same-sex desire, during this period of British history has been well-documented in surviving legal documents, medical papers, and creative works of the period. Figures like Lord Byron and Horace Walpole before him were open queer secrets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their works used classical texts to reference male homosexuality to their broad British audiences in a way that was often recognizable without significant backlash. However, female same-sex desire before the twentieth century has been harder for historians to document as it is underrepresented in legal documents, literature, and personal accounts. As Emma Donoghue detailed in her study of female same-sex desire from 1668 to 1801, “At its most single the difference seems to have been that sodomy between men was exposed and publicised as a crime [...] whereas lesbianism was generally treated as what church authorities called ‘the silent sin’” (*Passions Between Women* 8). This suppression on the part of religious leaders was also reflected in the laws and public opinion of the period, as “there were no laws against women’s sexual relations with women,” and women’s sexual activity was actively trivialized through popular media like that of John Cleland’s *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (Binhammer 2). Because of this active suppression of discussion surrounding queer women, there was very little widespread discussion of queer women, and thus the language that came to define queer women did not begin to take shape until the nineteenth century, and even then, it was underdeveloped. While this social and religious dismissal and lack of legal definition granted queer women more freedoms than queer men of the period, it ensured that female same-sex desire of the period existed within an undefined gray area of queer history.

Modern queer historians like Jack Halberstam, Susan Lanser, Lisa Moore, Martha Vicinus, and Sharon Marcus have argued that part of reconstructing a history of female same-sex desire within this undefined period is recognizing a spectrum of possible identities and forms of relationships rather than imposing modern definitions on periods in which queer identities were undefined.³ As Katherine Binhammer explored in her approach to examining eighteenth-century lesbianism, one side of this spectrum is inexplicit romantic friendships like that seen in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, which details a passionate relationship between women in which they snubbed ideas of marriage but never described their relationship as anything more than a friendship (8). These kinds of relationships are seen throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in both literary works and in personal accounts, and while they cannot be deemed sexual relationships, they exemplify a level of eroticism that cannot be overlooked within the context of literary tropes of the period (Binhammer 9). One of the clearest examples of this is the Ladies of Llangollen, two Irish women who immigrated together to Wales in the eighteenth century. Their relationship was widely discussed as a 'romantic friendship' as the two women lived the rest of their lives together in a small cottage where their relationship was recognized by locals and celebrities alike as something beyond mere

³ Halberstam's "Perverse Presentism" details the intersections of gender, masculinity, and sexuality and how this intersection affects the labeling of queer historical figures. Lanser argues in "Befriending the Body" that the economic context of sexuality must be applied to queer history. Moore argues in the conclusion of *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* that current standards of definitions cannot always be applied to historical sapphic relationships. Vicinus argues in *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* that the standard of proof for female same-sex relationships is often higher than both male same-sex and heterosexual relationships and explores the spectrum of romantic friendships throughout the centuries. In *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England*, Marcus challenges the common distinction between lesbian relationships and romantic friendships in the nineteenth century.

friendship.⁴ The term ‘romantic friendship’ has been useful in defining these kinds of relationships as it was a term used by the end of the nineteenth century for these kinds of relationships and now offers an ambiguity that is necessary when examining distinctly queer but undefined relationships.

On the other side of this spectrum of female same-sex desire is Anne Lister herself, one of the most explicit examples of female homosexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jack Halberstam’s approach to examining historical female same-sex desire presented in “Perverse Presentism” goes a step further by accounting for gender, masculinity, and what little language did exist at the time and arguing that “sexual identities, when and where they emerge as identities, tend to be exceedingly specific” and cannot “be summarized by a term such as “lesbian”” (56). Halberstam’s approach argues that instead of applying broad and unspecific modern terms, historical queer figures require a variety of adaptable terms that can be molded around the ways in which they expressed their queerness. When examining Lister, Halberstam argues that, considering her specific identity construction and clearly defined sexual exploits, Lister aligns much more with the term “female husband” in her deployment of her masculinity in her relationships than purely lesbian (69-71). This is because in her relationships, Lister continually takes on the responsibilities associated with male gender roles and even when she is not directly acting as a female husband, masculinity is an intrinsic part of her queer identity. In addition to this, Lister’s identity cannot be disconnected from “sexual inversion” which, by Lister’s adulthood, was an increasingly popular theory that was used to explain homosexuality beginning in the nineteenth century (Kennard 20-21). The

⁴ The Ladies of Llangollen and the ways in which they are interpreted by historians are discussed in detail in Chapter II: The Lady of Halifax.

theory connected gendered behavior to homosexuality and built on historical ideas that assumed queer women were hermaphrodites (Lanser, “Queer to Queer” 23-24). While female masculinity was deeply connected to female homosexuality during this period, however, Lister’s diaries show a plethora of examples of women who sat somewhere on the historical spectrum of same-sex desire who were not particularly masculine. It is for this reason that Lister’s masculinity must be noted when talking about her queer identity as not only did she explicitly state that she “love[d] and only love[d] the fairer sex” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 161), but she also detailed her construction of a queer identity and use of masculinity throughout her diaries, marking it as an intrinsic part of herself.

From the first publication of her diaries, scholars have been examining Lister’s distinct method of constructing her public and personal identities with a particular focus on her sexuality and masculinity. Alongside their publications of the largest excerpts of Lister’s diaries, Whitbread and Liddington have contributed to the study of Lister by beginning a dialogue about Lister’s identity construction. Aside from contextual editorial notes, Whitbread focuses on Lister’s ability to navigate nineteenth-century society and her identity formation within it, taking care to note the contexts of Lister’s relationships and how they affected her social circles. In her collections and other publications, Liddington focuses on placing Lister’s identity within the overall context of women’s history with a particular focus on her navigation of the British economic and political systems. In her article, “Beating the Inheritance Bounds,” Liddington explores how Lister approached the subject of inheritance, which played a significant role in shaping her identity before and after she inherited her family estate. This is explored further in all

three of Liddington's collections of Lister's diaries as Liddington has edited her collections to focus primarily on Lister's position as a landowner. Her first collection, *Presenting the Past*, focuses on placing Lister's earlier diary entries into the political context of the early nineteenth century and examines how Lister used her political power as a woman and landowner. Her second collection, *Nature's Domain*, examines Lister's relationship with Ann Walker and how Shibden itself played a role in Lister's search for a wife as she attempted to move the Lister family up from the lower end of the upper class through business and an Austenian marriage plot. Her most recent collection, *Female Fortune*, examines Lister's diaries within the years in which she gained control of Shibden Hall and wielded significant political power, focusing specifically on her role in elections in the 1830s. In addition to examining the power Lister claimed as a landowner, Liddington's work also explores the ways in which Shibden Hall shaped Lister as it had not been passed through the family in a traditional way. Because the men of the Lister family rarely married and had children, Shibden often moved from a single male uncle to a nephew rather than through direct lineage, and it was only through pure bad luck throughout the rest of her generation that Anne Lister was chosen as heir. Alison Oram also explores this indirect inheritance in "Sexuality in Heterotopia" as a process that queered both the estate and Lister's environment, and thus gave her a means by which she could express her queer identity without losing her respectability. This safe, queer environment, Oram argues, is what allows Lister to strike a balance between her public and private identities that were so clearly constructed by Lister within her diaries.

From her diaries and the other thousands of pages of her surviving writing, scholars have concluded that one of the ways in which Lister finds this balance is through

a process of recognition and replication of public figures such as Lord Byron. Anna Clark is one of the first to examine this process in “Anne Lister’s Construction of a Lesbian Identity.” In her article, she focuses on the distinctly Romantic ideas and writers around which Lister shapes both her public persona and her personal identity. Like Byron, Lister used Greek literature to explain her queer and androgynous leanings (32). The two of them also used similar interpretations of the Bible to align their sexualities with Christian beliefs. However, these were not the end of Lister’s connections to Byron. In her article, “The Byronic Woman,” Clara Tuite examines Lister as “a leading example of the commodification of aristocracy which marks Romantic culture: literally, a *gentrification* of Byron”⁵ in everything from how she dressed to ways in which she explored her sexuality (190). This emulation of Byron, Tuite argues, was one of the ways in which she presented herself as a gentleman and allowed her to express her masculinity in a way that would not be shunned by the rest of her community. Anira Rowanchild and Terry Castle have also noted Lister’s use of Byron in her identity construction. Castle argues that Lister’s use of Byron is emblematic of a trend that would continue in lesbian identity construction with George Sand, Radclyffe Hall, and Vita Sackville-West (103). Rowanchild also examined her use of the gothic and the picturesque to construct and conceal her queer identity through popular tropes of the period (“Everything Done for Effect” 94-98). These examinations of Lister’s queer identity show how important her surviving writings are to constructing a queer history, but they also help to show the historical context of women, specifically women writers, of the period and the difficulties they faced in balancing social acceptability with personal expression.

⁵ Italicization is from Tuite’s article.

Lister was very aware of her position as a woman in early nineteenth-century England. Whatever power she had was tenuous and was maintained only through her elaborate identity construction. As Liddington highlights in her collections of Lister's diaries, Lister was one of a minority of women who became heirs of families, and it was only because of the deaths of her brothers and other young male relatives that she was chosen to inherit the family estate without the male interference her wife, Ann Walker, had upon her inheritance of the Walker estate (Liddington, *Female Fortune* 15-24, 36-38). Her official inheritance was bolstered by her use of masculinity to invade male-dominated spaces beginning with her collecting of rent payments from her tenants and her reopening and expanding the Shibden coal pits. Additionally, her control of the estate was contingent upon her not marrying a man. At the time that Lister inherited the estate, "it was another four decades, on the passing of the Married Women's Property Act in 1870... before women would be able to keep hold of and inherit property following marriage" (Choma and Wainwright ix). By not marrying a man and building an identity that aligned more with Georgian ideals of masculinity, Lister was able to amass a certain amount of power other women were denied throughout her lifetime, including growing her family's wealth and doing so without the interference of men.

All of this power, however, came at the cost of Lister's continual balance of her public image as both a lady and a gentleman. While there were not many traditional gender roles to which she conformed, publishing any of her work was a step too far, especially in light of how many women writers of the period were treated. Between the years of 1750 and 1800, the number of women writers grew exponentially to the point that roughly 51% of published works were written by women (Johnson 5). During this

period, groups of women writers like the Bluestocking group also rose to popularity and gained praise from even conservative voices like Hannah More (5). Despite this growth and popularity, there was significant distrust of women writers throughout the period. A part of this distrust came from communities women created around writing because “if eighteenth-century femininity was defined by its seclusion in the private space, then groups of women writing for the public could be imagined as sexual monstrosities” (6). Moreover, writers like Richard Polwhele also claimed that women writers, especially Romantics like Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Smith, Anna Barbauld, and Mary Robinson, were “Unsex’d Females” and whores who had abandoned domestic duties (7). When women like Emily Brontë were published and popular, their personal lives were at risk of erasure to avoid any scandals that may hide behind their writing. As someone barely holding onto whatever power she had been lucky enough to inherit, Lister could not afford the added publicity and scrutiny of publishing her works, and it is likely because of this hesitance that her writing still exists today.

However, this does not mean she did not write publishable works throughout her life. Among her diaries, Lister wrote at least one independent travel manuscript detailing her first trip to Paris. Despite this and her writings serving as one of the largest collections of surviving documents from the Romantic period, research abounds on the importance of her diaries but very little of that research has examined Lister as a writer rather than an historical figure. Anira Rowanchild is one of the few scholars who discusses Lister’s collection of diaries as a form of life writing that is similar to the diaries of Dorothy Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth, Lister was often defensive of her diaries as private accounts in conversations, but spoke often about publishing versions of

certain accounts before burning them (201-203). Additionally, while many of her entries monotonously retold the actions and events of the day in extreme detail, there are also large swathes of her diaries that “told and retold her story of herself, and, in the telling of past events, constructed the meaning of the next” in such a way that was able to build her identity and story through her diaries (204-206). This building of an identity is achieved through a notably masculine style of claiming subjectivity that was common within autobiographical writing but rare within diaries. However, Lister uses this claim of subjectivity to establish and stabilize her identity within her diaries. This level of identity construction, paired with her nonchalant guarding of her code and diaries and open circulation of it among her lovers, suggests that while she did not publish them, she hoped that they would one day see a broader readership than just herself.

When Lister did consider publishing, the majority of the excerpts she considered were of her travel journals. Travel writing was a popular genre with women writers of the Romantic period. It was used by Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley and other popular female writers to hone their writing skills, and it quickly gained traction among female writing groups (Fay 74-75). Because travelogues were often comprised of domestic writing like letters and journals, it was seen as a less controversial genre for women to publish within (74). Lister was aware of this growing field of writing and, as an avid traveler who toured the majority of Europe and into Russia, had plenty of travel journals filled with the details of foreign countries. Though none of these were ever published, Kirsty McHugh analyzes Lister’s travel writing in comparison to common tropes of travel writing within the period and argues that “Lister’s journals offer up new possibilities for understanding how people in the 1820s experienced and described travel”

through her keen eye for detail and genuine writing abilities (432). Part of this unique perspective comes from Lister's use of subjectivity within her travel writing, often moving between stable and fluid subjectivities. In sections where she claims a stable subjectivity, her writing centers on her interpretations of her travels and establishes her as an integrated traveler rather than a casual tourist. In sections in which she claims a more fluid subjectivity, her focus moves outward and examines the areas in which she is traveling thoroughly with very little personal input. These styles of writing are rarely moved between so often and are indicative of Lister's use of masculinity, as a stable self in writing is often viewed as a more masculine style. It is this genderfluid approach to subjectivity that makes Lister's travel writing so unique as it presses back against established Romantic travel writers by queering the genre. With this blended approach, Lister's travel writing offers an inimitable view into both the places she visits and how she constructs her identity through writing.

Building on this existing research, this thesis looks at Lister's writings as part of the Romantic literary tradition through her use of its ideas, her historical position within the tradition, and the ways in which her writing fits and extends the tradition. This examination shows that Lister contributes significantly to the study of Romanticism as she offers a distinctly queer perspective into the tradition and its ideals and a means to view the period through a marginalized lens. Through this examination, I hope to open a dialogue about Lister's and other similar writer's positions within the Romantic period as passive or unpublished participants in the literary tradition who have traditionally been overlooked by scholars.

In Chapter II, “Building Gentleman Jack: Anne Lister’s Use of Romanticism,” I examine how Lister uses Romantic works and their writers, specifically Lord Byron, to construct her own personal identity despite her lack of participation in either the written tradition or in the major social movements of the period during her lifetime. Upon first examination, Lister outwardly possesses very few of the beliefs that marked many Romantic writers as social and political radicals. She was an active participant in the coal trade, reopening closed pits and sinking new ones on the Shibden estate, which directly opposed the Romantics’ reverence for the natural world. She was a political conservative who openly campaigned for the Tory party despite writers like Lord Byron decrying its political beliefs and policies. She was an Anglican who seems to have viewed her religion as a social practice rather than a spiritual one, again contradicting Romantic ideals of internal spirituality and external critiques of organized religion. These contradictions are significant and important to acknowledge when comparing Lister to other Romantic writers, but they do not overshadow the places in which she clearly uses tropes of Romantic writing throughout her life. Though much of her public persona clashes with the political and religious ideals of later British Romanticism, Lister’s construction of her private identities purposefully mirrors major writers and ideas of the period. The primary writer around whom she crafted her persona was Lord Byron, taking on specific aspects of his gentlemanly persona to make her own controversial image more palatable to her conservative community.

One of the primary ways in which Lister used Byron’s persona to craft her own was through his performance of the Georgian gentleman. Though figures throughout England were using the archetype of the respectable gentleman to move through British

society, Byron's gentlemanly performance was shaped purposefully around his literary career as a Romantic writer and thus presented a more controversial but intriguing version. It is around this public and unique gentleman persona that Lister crafted her own version of the gentleman, one that allowed her to translate her masculinity and queerness to the small, conservative community of Halifax. Through this performance, Lister was able to gain a significant amount of power within Halifax as well as build an identity on distinctly Byronic and Romantic ideas of gender and masculinity that is then translated through her diaries. In this process of recognition and replication, Lister serves as an example of how Romanticism served as a medium of translation for underrepresented communities in the nineteenth century.

In Chapter III, "The Lady of Halifax: Romanticism's Use of Queer Women," I theorize that Lister's relationship with later Romanticism mirrors that of the Ladies of Llangollen to early Romantic writers. The Ladies of Llangollen, Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, were two Irish women who fled to Wales to avoid their families' plans for their futures, which included marriage for Ponsonby and a convent for Butler. Shortly after arriving in Wales, the two women and their secluded cottage became a local anomaly that was widely discussed first throughout the community and then throughout Wales, Britain, and Ireland. Throughout the Romantic period, the Ladies were used as muses by major writers. William Wordsworth was fascinated by the Ladies as a symbol of friendship beyond description, going so far as to write a sonnet, "To the Lady E.B and the Hon. Miss P," dedicated to their "friendship." Anna Seward had a long-running correspondence with the Ladies and wrote her poem, "Llangollen Vale," to celebrate their seemingly unique relationship. Thomas de Quincey, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, and

Caroline Lamb also all came into contact with the women and wrote about their eccentric characters and deep relationship as a symbol of Romantic ideals of romantic friendship. Of these writers, very few ever acknowledged the sexual element of their relationship, choosing instead to make them a symbol of their ideals. Anne Lister, who visited Llangollen twice towards the end of their lives, explicitly stated that she did not view their relationship as platonic, and throughout her diaries, it is clear that she viewed them as an example of a lasting queer relationship. She and her lover, Marianna, spoke about one day owning a cottage like theirs, and Lister's use of masculinity mirrors that of Eleanor Butler. This shows Lister's search for queer community and the comfort she took in being able to recognize and replicate what she saw as an explicit example of homosexuality.

A few years later, when Emily Brontë was teaching in the town of Halifax, this chapter theorizes that Lister served a similar role. Through combined contexts of Lister's influence in Halifax and the company kept by Brontë during her time there, it is likely that she would have at least heard of Anne Lister and her wife, Ann Walker, living in the secluded Shibden Hall. Rather than poems explicitly naming the two queer women, Brontë seems to have used Lister as a frame of reference for two of her most memorable characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, as well as her own performance of masculinity.⁶ In these roles, however, Lister and Walker are no longer the epitome of romantic friendship as the Ladies were before them but rather othered characters and influences that were dismissed or completely erased upon the death of Brontë. This transition in the

⁶ See Berg; Emberson and Emberson; Hughes, "Was Eliza Raine the Real Mrs Rochester?"; Kennard; Liddington, "Anne Lister and Emily Brontë"; Longmuir; and Simon Marsden, "Imagination, Materiality and the Act of Writing in Emily Brontë's Diary Papers."

representation of queer women from the early years of the Romantic period to its end and the beginning of the Victorian Era may serve as a partial explanation as to why Lister was so fearful of publishing her work. With the rise of the Victorian Ideal, she was faced with a public quickly turning against everything she had built herself to be. However, likely because of this turn, Lister's privacy was kept intact and her writing survives today to be examined without censorship.

In Chapter IV, "Posthumously Romanticized: Anne Lister as a Romantic Writer," I argue that Lister's writing contributes significantly to the study of Romanticism by offering a new approach to life and travel writing through her explicitly queer approach to style and subjectivity within her writing. Though Lister's writing was not published at the time, her style of writing often uses tropes of life writing that were common for women writers of the nineteenth century. One of the only known independent works of Lister's is a detailed account of her first trip to Paris that she sent to her family friends, the Duffins. This work is over seventy pages, and in it, Lister shows her unique approach to subjectivity in travel writing as she clearly establishes herself as a Romantic traveler rather than a tourist while also offering the detailed accounts that were expected from female travel writers. Using Anne Mellor's spectrum of masculine and feminine subjectivity, I examine the ways in which Lister moved between these forms of subjectivity, sometimes taking a passive feminine role within her narrative and other times taking an active masculine role, and how that effects the narrative.

This movement becomes even more explicit when examining Lister's diaries as this movement is accentuated by Lister's use of her code and the context of autobiographical life writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Within the

Romantic period, autobiography was often used by writers to establish a stable masculine persona. Women writers were often wary of writing within the genre as they were often criticized as vain for the genre's pure focus on the writer. For this reason, women often preferred diaries as a form of life writing as the subject of the narrative was more fluid, and the genre was increasingly expected to be used as a form of records for households. Lister's writings stand apart within this genre. While most of her writing is in a markedly feminine genre, Lister uses her diaries to claim the same kind of stable masculine persona seen in autobiographical writing from the time. She accomplishes this claim to a stable identity within her diaries by often moving between feminine and masculine subjectivity through her code. In bending this genre into one that serves to clearly establish her identity through her code and then circulating that code to primarily other queer women, Lister builds an audience of people who would recognize and understand her use of queer subjectivity as a reflection of her queer identity. Through this movement between subjectivity in her styles of writing, Lister is able to achieve a level of authenticity and honesty that was sought by Romantic writers in their autobiographical works but rarely achieved.

It is because of Anne Lister's clear use and queering of Romantic styles and ideas that this thesis concludes that her writing serves an important purpose in the study of Romanticism. In her use of Romanticism, Lister shows a practical application of Romantic ideas and concepts within the life of someone disconnected from the written tradition. As a reader rather than recognized writer, Lister's use of Romanticism does not serve as a performance for an audience but rather as a practical means to translate identity through the writers' ideas. She also serves as a link between two of Romanticism's

approaches to representing queer women and is indicative of a widespread shift towards the conservatism that marked the Victorian era. In linking the Ladies of Llangollen to Emily Brontë, Lister exemplifies the necessary historical context of queer women within the nineteenth century and the ways in which they were erased even by the writers and audiences who placed them within the public eye. It likely because of her awareness of this reality that Lister's writing still exists today to offer a queer lens into Romanticism. It is through her writing that Lister exemplifies a queered version of Romanticism that embraces a gray area between masculine and feminine subjectivity that even writers like Byron were afraid to inhabit. Through her relationship with Romanticism, Anne Lister was able not just to interact with literary tradition but expand upon it through her unique perspective and experience within it.

CHAPTER II

Constructing Gentleman Jack: Anne Lister's Use of Romanticism

“O books! books! I owe you so much. Ye are my spirit’s oil without which, its own friction against itself would wear it out” ends one of Anne Lister’s diary entries from 1824 (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 288), exemplifying in a single quote her devotion to literature and hinting at the ways she used literature to shape her identity so that it would not wear itself down against the restrictions of her time. Her love and use of literature throughout her life is further supported by the large collection of reading notes and copied quotations that exist outside of her diaries, which fill approximately eleven separate volumes as well as the margins of many of the books that passed through her extensive library.⁷ The sheer sum of these notes offers a view into Lister’s reading habits that contrasts starkly to her sparse mentions of literature throughout her daily diaries. Because these reading notes are not as widely available as the published selections from her daily journals, however, much of the discussion surrounding Lister’s reading and education comes from her journals, in which she also recounts her reading habits, though with very minimal details. Within these almost purely archival mentions of what she is reading at the time, very few works or authors warrant repeated mentions let alone significant discussion, and when they do, they demand attention, and no writer is mentioned more than Lord Byron. Lister uses his writing to communicate with at least one prospective lover,⁸ and she mourns his death upon hearing of it, calling him “the greatest poet of the age” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 371). Lister did more

⁷ See Colclough 159. These notes are listed in the West Yorkshire Archive catalog as a collection of miscellaneous notebooks including lecture notes, school notebooks, and book extracts.

⁸ See Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 53, 54, and 96.

than just admire Byron as a writer; she tried to emulate him throughout her life. She dressed like him, acted like him, followed in his footsteps,⁹ and shaped her writing around his to such an extent that she became a real-life Byronic character and, in the process, used Byron's version of Romanticism as an identity.

Though Byron is by no means the only Romantic writer after whom Anne Lister seems to have crafted her writing and persona, Byron serves as the primary connection point between Lister and Romanticism. Byron was a traveler who romanticized his experiences abroad through his writing, representing "travel as the compulsive antidote to personal sorrow" (Jarvis, "Self-discovery" 189). Lister followed in his footsteps, often noting in her journals and letters that she is restless at home and saying at one point after a brief trip away that, "the climate, too, had really some portion of my lament; it certainly suits me rather better than this" before finally conceding, "home is home" (Green 80). Byron lived a life of sexual abandon that ultimately saw him exiled from England and, in his writing, expressed the often inexplicit queerness of Romanticism's sexual experimentation and transgression of societal boundaries. Lister came to value this queerness in Romantic literature, often gifting pieces like Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* or Byron's *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* to her prospective partners. Additionally, Byron's persona that he expressed through his characters was one that Lister lived through her isolation and world-weary perspective and served as a means to navigate her world in an easily recognizable mask. In these points of connection, Byron became the window through which Lister viewed Romanticism.

⁹ Choma 11-12 details an encounter in which Lister found a place where Byron had stayed briefly and paid the family to see the exact room before questioning them on the details of his stay. Steidele 191 also details Lister convincing her travel companion to divert their paths to visit places Byron was known to have visited.

It is because of Lister's interpreting Romanticism through Byron that this chapter will also examine Lister's use of core Romantic beliefs and Byronic mannerisms to construct her queer identity. Lister purposefully used her constructed identity and the ideals on which it was built to navigate her unique position within her society. This chapter attempts to fill an important gap in scholarship surrounding Lister's identity since previous scholarship has examined Lister only through the lens of her admittedly unique position within queer history as one of the most explicit examples of female homosexuality.¹⁰ Within this examination of Lister as a historic lesbian, there has been comparatively little attention paid to the ways in which Lister appropriated the ideas and practices of others, specifically Romantic writers, to construct the image of herself that allowed for her proud queer identity.¹¹ From her teenage years onward, Lister collected ideas, images, and published works that broke with the traditional, conservative ideals on which she was raised and adapted them for her own use in expanding her queer identity, and the area from which she took the majority of these ideals was Romanticism. These concepts were taken primarily from Lord Byron, but other Romantic ideas like bending social norms are present throughout her writings and lay the foundation for her queer identity. Of the scholars who do investigate Lister's use of the Romantics, even fewer have thoroughly examined Lister's method of adaptation as a distinctly queer process of

¹⁰ For more information on Lister's formation of a lesbian identity, see Orr 203-213, Rowanchild, "My Mind on Paper" 199-207, and Rowanchild, "Skirting the Margins" 145-157. Additionally, Lister's two major biographies by Steidle and Choma and Wainwright both center around her relationships with women and how she navigated them. Steidle organizes her chapters by Lister's major relationships and Choma and Wainwright focus primarily on Lister's courting of and marriage to Ann Walker. These autobiographies are emblematic of Lister's primary distinction as a historical lesbian.

¹¹ For more on Anne Lister's construction of her identity through adaptation, see Clark, "Anne Lister's" 26-40 and "Secrets and Lies" 60-69.

recognition and replication within the community.¹² This chapter aims to bridge a portion of this gap by examining Lister's use of both Lord Byron and Romanticism and argues that in her method of building an identity through the recognizable traits of the Romantic movement and its writers, Anne Lister exemplifies a tradition of queer survival methods that ensured her ability to exist and thrive within a period of history in which she was at constant risk of erasure.

While Anne Lister's identity is an amalgamation of several different influences, it is not surprising that Lord Byron is the most visible of these influences. Byron was one of the first modern celebrities, engulfed in scandal and gawking fans wherever he went. With his rapid rise to fame, Byron created for himself a very distinct persona to display to the public which he publicized through his writings, specifically *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, his second major publication. While the work itself plays a relatively minor role in Lister's relationship with Byron at first glance across her diaries, the process of its publication is where Lister's knowledge of Byron begins, and his rise to fame through a carefully maintained persona was one that Lister mirrored on a smaller scale within her own community. In his examination of *Childe Harold's* publication, Nicolas Mason calls the work from beginning to print "not only a turning point in literary and advertising history but, just as important, a key moment in the commodification of the aesthetic" (440) as its success was born out of a consorted two-part effort to make the name of Byron famous and tie his work directly to the caricature he created for that fame. Mere weeks before the poem was scheduled for publication, Byron gave a spirited anti-Tory

¹² Clara Tuite and Terry Castle are the primary scholars who have explored Lister's method of replication as queer process, focusing specifically on her use of the Byronic figure as a means of representing her masculinity. However, they do not theorize that Lister viewed Byron as a similarly queer figure or that her replication of his persona was a method of queer identity formation.

speech in the House of Lords that captivated conversations in London (431). The mixed reactions to Byron's speech forced his publisher to rush a depoliticization campaign around the poem, explicitly tying it to Byron's travels as a fictionalized travelogue (434). The campaign and the publicity that came before it worked, and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* emerged as an instant best-seller that secured for Byron country-wide renown as both a writer and real-life Childe Harold. With his own experiences and that of his character to guide him, Byron took on the persona for which he is known—worldly, gentlemanly but mysterious, and wildly eccentric—and soon, there were few distinctions between the man and the mask. This blend of performance alongside the stranger-than-fiction actuality of Byron's life and persona catapulted him into the public eye where he with the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of his life were laid bare before the whole of England, even the small distant town of Halifax.

The popularity of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* cannot be completely attributed to the infamous persona of Byron, however. Alongside the aggressive publicity campaign, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and later *Don Juan* capitalized on the incredibly popular genre of travel writing. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, travel writing was one of the most popular genres as it was easily accessible to the increasingly literate middle-class and provided “an affordable, if not imaginative rather than substantial, substitute for the elite experience of the Grand Tour” that marked the upper class (Fay 73). Additionally, it was one of the few genres during the period in which women were both the primary writers and readers. Women writers used the Romantic idea of “the individual as a wandering free spirit, in search of a personal answer to an identity crisis, and whose writing [was] ‘authentic’, spontaneous and

confessional” to offer a form of vicarious freedom to their predominately female audience (Mulligan 2-3). Though male Romantics like Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth occasionally published within the genre, women’s writing “contributed significantly to broader cultural understanding” as women writers had to fit within expectations that their male counterparts did not and thus often wrote highly detailed accounts about different societies’ gender roles and experiences (Fay 78).

Lister was an avid reader of several of these women travel writers, and she used this method of combining cultural understandings with a sense of autonomy gained through travel within her own travel writing, particularly her letters. For example, despite the tone of hostility she had in her early writing years surrounding France, one of her letters during an 1819 visit to Paris with her aunt offers a friendly, observative view of the city. After noting the differences from “the bustling scene about London,” she offers extensive details of a garden they visited and admits that, “It was here, however, we felt ourselves most peculiarly in Paris – that we soon learnt to sit or saunter like the rest – to enjoy the verdant canopy that shaded off the blinding glare of the sun, and to pay our two sols apiece for the chairs” (Green 42-43). Her simultaneous analysis of Parisian culture and induction into it mirrors that of other female writers in that she is both a passive and active observer of the city and its people, providing a clear picture for her readers while emphasizing her role within it.

Byron also used this combination within his writing to both capitalize on the existent audience of travel writing by marketing *Childe Harold* as a travelogue while pulling in a male audience through his appeals to a more traditional, masculine form of Romanticism, and Anne Lister was one of the audience members brought in by this

marketing. Though it was a controversial piece for women to read at the time, *Don Juan* is one of the most commonly mentioned works in her diaries in both general comments and recollections of conversations, and while it seems to have been her favored Byron poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is a close second. Where *Don Juan* was controversial, *Childe Harold* was less explicit and more accessible via libraries throughout the early nineteenth century (St. Clair 254), and Lister used this to her advantage in one of the first romantic relationships she recorded in her diaries. In 1818, she met Miss Brown, a wealthy young woman from Halifax, who shared Lister's appreciation for the early cantos of *Childe Harold*. After their meeting, Lister writes about "sending her a Cornelian heart with a copy of his lines on the subject" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 53),¹³ and the poem appears throughout their relationship in both physical and conversational forms. Where the provocative nature of Byron's other work would have been suspicious for two young women to discuss and gift each other openly, *Childe Harold* served as a popular alternative that roused little suspicion without losing the feeling of sensationalism that came with all things Byron.

It was not just the utility of *Childe Harold* that likely drew Lister's interest in the poem, however. As mentioned, following the public outrage towards Byron after his anti-Tory speech, there was a frantic campaign to republicize the piece as a fictional travelogue that was inspired by Byron's own travels. Though no explicit mentions of this from Lister's diaries have been found,¹⁴ it parallels Lister's own life too closely to be

¹³ In transcriptions of Lister's diaries, italicization is used to indicate when she is writing in code and the same is used in this manuscript unless otherwise specified.

¹⁴ There are roughly eleven volumes of reading notes from throughout Lister's life currently in the possession of West Yorkshire Archive that have not been translated, so there may be references in these. However, more research is required, and as of now, there are no mentions of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as a travel narrative in the available collections of Lister's work.

ignored. Lister was an avid traveler who spent long periods of her adult life away from home and documented each trip thoroughly in her diaries. She was an experienced hiker and her goal later in life was to visit Russia and go on to Persia, and in a tragic turn of events, she died during her final trip at the age of forty-nine shortly after entering Russia. Before her death, whenever she would return home to Shibden, Lister often read the parts of her journals that detailed her trips aloud to friends and family and expressed interest in one day publishing a collection of these sections, though she never did (McHugh 422). In her analysis of Lister's diaries as travel narratives, Kristy McHugh argues that Lister's diaries could easily be considered a new form of travelogue, saying that though Lister never published these entries, they "offer up new possibilities for understanding how people in the 1820s experienced and described travel" and "reveal a more complete tourist experience than conventional travelogues" (432). Like Byron before her, Lister often offers incredible details about the places she visits in her diaries and letters, and it is not a far stretch to say that she may have taken inspiration from *Childe Harold* and its own unconventional take on the travelogue genre when writing what she hoped would be her own publishable works.

While his works served very specific roles in Lister's life, it was Byron himself who most shaped Lister and her identity. Lister was very aware of and often emulated aspects of Byron's publicized persona, especially those that were highlighted around the publication of *Childe Harold*. In everything from how she dressed to interactions with the people around her, Lister bore striking resemblances to the persona and literary heroes of Byron. For example, both Byron and Lister created for themselves the image of an annoyed celebrity, maintaining their cordial manners within their active social lives while

also giving the appearance of disinterest and superiority. For Byron, this performance was explicit in his wife Annabella Milbanke's recollections of her husband upon meeting him at a party in London where Milbanke took notice of his "disdainful expression... restless eyes, and the frequency with which he masked the impatient twitch of his full lips with his hand" (Seymour 30). This was apparently a common tactic for Byron when curating his persona. He worked to imply impatience for socializing while maintaining a courteous appearance that balanced out into the image of a restless gentleman. In examining this part of Byron's identity, Gabriele Poole says that Milbanke saw this impatience for socializing as his true feelings—a side-effect of his restless mind and seemingly endless wealth of energy. However, Poole argues that even this was also likely fabricated by Byron, as in more private settings away from the prying eyes of the public, Byron was often "extroverted, care-free, and affectionate" with those around him (8). This fracturing of his identity between public and private spheres gave Byron the ability to highly regulate his image and align it with a more mysterious version of himself, one that was emotionally disconnected from those around him and unencumbered by personal attachments. Additionally, by hiding this more gregarious side of himself in public settings and relegating it to private ones, Byron maintained a persona that matched the troubled, anti-social heroes used in his literary works like the dark hero Don Juan or the brooding Manfred—the same heroes that shaped Anne Lister's method of constructing her own public persona.

When Lister constructed her own versions of her identity, she, too, painted herself as someone who diligently preserved a wide distance between herself and those around her. Throughout her journals, she expresses her distaste for the people of Halifax, saying

about one of her neighbors, “Thank God I have nothing to do with their parties, nor do I intend it ever” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 47). She goes on tangents about the frivolity of her female company, saying that one of her acquaintances “*is the image of her father everything*” and that she “*does, & often will, let herself down,*” (114). In contrast, Lister prides herself on what she saw as a comparably virtuous pursuit: her intense academic career. Throughout her journals, she can be seen bemoaning interruptions to her studies, saying at one point, “It is about 2 years since my first begging Sophocles [...] but I have had long & many interruptions during this time. [...] will now stick with Greek till I have mastered it, let this cost me what time & pains it will” (166). Her appreciation for her studies, specifically her study of classical literature, is also likely a reaction to Byron and his use of specific texts throughout his work (Clark, “Anne Lister’s” 37). Because of this appreciation of academics over people, along with her position as a landowner and employer, she became an outsider within her community and gained a snobbish reputation that, when she was unable to travel, caused her to socially seclude herself at Shibden. Despite her reputation, however, Lister’s status and wealth also made her a social commodity, and this tension between her anti-social personality and her value in terms of social status shaped her into a sort of a local celebrity. With so much of both her persona and her perception of a celebrity shaped around Lord Byron in the wake of - *Childe Harold*, Lister essentially became the Byron of Halifax, with her presence at events marking the hosts’ social status and her personal company becoming a commodity flaunted within the community that outweighed the personal slight of her harsh opinions (Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 15). This celebrity status in Halifax brought with it a certain amount of protection for Lister to express her non-traditional and often markedly

queer identities. The Romantic period was marked by “transgression[s] of social norms,” and Byron’s persona and his work were symbols of this (Clark, “Secrets and Lies” 61). By becoming a commodity, especially one shaped around the ultimate commodity of the period, Lord Byron himself, Lister was able to break away from traditional femininity and instead embraced a distinctly masculine, gentlemanly persona that echoed Byron in her ability to avoid being ostracized by her conservative community despite her often abrasive personality and lack of traditional social conformity.

However, it was not just Byron’s disinterested, commodified celebrity persona that Lister mirrored within her own identity formation; she also reflected several visual and physical aspects of Byron and his literary characters. In modern literary studies, the “Byronic character” brings to mind the image of a tall, dark, and handsome figure, and to an extent, Byron himself upheld that. Though Byron did not have a distinct style of dressing, he maintained his wardrobe in a way that hid his flaws and accentuated his features that fit within the image he was trying to create. Because of his eating disorder he suffered from throughout his adult life and the weight fluctuations it caused (Baron 1697), Byron was known to wear loose clothing and shoes that hid his clubfoot (Simonsen 164). These subtle ways in which he dressed show how he adapted his image to conceal the flaws he saw in himself and allowed him to control his public image even more, maintaining the picture of an able-bodied gentleman that was so necessary to function in the public eye of nineteenth-century England.

Lister followed in his footsteps by creating her own style that fit into the form of a Georgian gentleman. In 1817 after her lover, Mariana, married a man, she “entered upon [her] plan of always wearing black” (qtd. In Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 24) to

symbolize her mourning. This choice was a very dramatic and public sign of mourning for a relationship that was such a tightly held secret as well as a drastic shift away from the conventional fashion of the time. For the majority of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women of upper classes wore light colors, specifically white, and dress shapes were continually shifting to keep stride with fashion trends and technologies. Conversely, men's clothing was dominated by dark, heavier fabrics and fewer structural changes throughout the decades (Cunnington 16-17), and Lister's choices imitated this. Along with a sea of black fabric, her clothing imitated men's fashion with a mixture of both masculine and feminine undergarments; a penchant for militaresque detailing, such as a particular style of pelisse dress that mimics the jacket of the British military uniform; and unstructured skirts that ignored the quickly widening crinolines of the early Victorian period. Lister was already a tall, androgynous figure on her own, and her change of wardrobe only furthered her visibility within her community, gaining her the nickname "Gentleman Jack" (Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* xxii). She embraced the originally derogatory name wholeheartedly and even bragged in a journal entry that, "*the people generally remark, as I pass along, how much I am like a man*" (60). This pride she felt upon being confused for a man is emblematic of her view of her own masculinity as something that gave her power that other women—including other queer women with whom she was acquainted—were not afforded. In mixing both masculine and feminine, Lister was not just bending her gender; she was solidifying her position as a gentleman in all but sex.

This image of a gentleman extended beyond just offering Lister protection; it brought her genuine power. She was not the first choice to inherit Shibden Hall. Her

bachelor uncle had been controlling the family estate for years when she came to live with him and his sister during her late teenage years. Her brother, Samuel, was the favored of the surviving Lister children to claim the estate, which she acknowledged in her final letter to him in which she said, “You my dear Sam, are the last remaining hope and stay of an old, but lately drooping family. Seize it in its fall. Renovate its languid energies; rear it with a tender hand, and let it once more bloom upon the spray” (qtd. in Green 38). Unexpectedly, however, he drowned weeks later at the age of twenty, leaving Anne and her sister Marian as the only Lister children of their generation to live into adulthood (Liddington, *Female Fortune* 10-11). As the eldest and most educated, Anne became the presumptive heir and moved to Shibden to begin learning the ins and outs of the estate. In the eleven years between her move to Shibden and her initial inheritance of the estate upon her uncle’s death in 1826,¹⁵ Lister shaped her masculinity and reputation around her goal to eventually restore Shibden to its previous grandeur. As soon as she had the freedom to do so, she began renovating the house to reflect the Tudor style in which it was originally built by installing a new grand fireplace and adding a gallery into the main room, “creating the effect of an open medieval manor hall” (Oram, “Sexuality” 539).

This change in appearance was emblematic of the most important change Lister intended to make, which was to reinstate the estate’s coal pits and gain some form of control over the local coal trade. As Jill Liddington argued in her paper on the Shibden coal pits, Lister’s independence and intelligence made her a formidable competitor within the local economy (“Gender, Authority” 68-69), and rather than inhibiting her, her

¹⁵ Lister was first written into her uncle’s will in 1822. She partially inherited Shibden Hall after her uncle’s death in 1826, but she did not gain full control of the estate until her aunt died in 1836.

lesbianism and the masculinity through which she expressed it only added to her power. By the end of her life, she was in control of the Shibden pits as well as those owned by the Walker family as she had unofficially married the family heiress, Ann. Her relationship with Ann accentuated her masculinity even further as she was recognized by other landowners as the representative of both estates, and thus she could not be dismissed as a “*wife dutifully helping her husband with the accounts or a widow keeping the family business going for her son*” as so many women of the period were (82). She had too much power. Lister likely would have never been able to claim so much power had she not had the means to translate her masculinity into a gentlemanly persona. In shaping her masculinity in the image of a gentleman and commodifying herself in the same way Byron did before her, Lister was able to protect herself from backlash for both claiming power rarely afforded to women of the period and not conforming in everything from her education to her sexuality.

This does raise the question of whether Lister’s image of a gentleman was based specifically on Byron or if they were both capitalizing on a common phenomenon. While their similarities in presenting a gentlemanly persona may seem circumstantial, there is significant evidence that Lister was intentionally appropriating the image of Byron in particular to further her status and express her personal identity in a way that was simultaneously hyper-visible through its abnormality and invisible within her cultural context. When examining Lister’s Byronic persona, Clara Tuite calls Lister “a leading example of the commodification of aristocracy which marks Romantic culture: literally, a gentrification of Byron” and an embodiment of the “elusive fetish of the gentleman” (190). This fetish was pervasive throughout the period due to the use of the Romantic

gentlemanly figure as a tool to climb the social ladders of England on image alone rather than through wealth (187). Byron himself is illustrative of this in the elaborate publication of *Childe Harold* through the commodification of his image of the gentleman, as it was ultimately born from his anxiety over class and social standing following his choice to become an author (Mason 427). However, Byron's use of the gentleman was one of the most public of its time and was marked by Byron's lack of conformity to the traditional gentleman that became its own form in the culture to follow. Lister's adaptation of the Byronic gentleman was part of a cultural phenomenon in which the only abnormality was her gender as she, too, was trying to give the appearance of a higher status than she and her family actually possessed. Though the Listers were a landowning family in Halifax, they sat on the lower cusp of the upper-class, and Lister herself intended to change that by reflecting a man despite being a woman in a world literally run by men. In using the figure of Byron as her basis of a gentlemanly persona, Lister was able to express her queer identity without sacrificing her respectability and was actually able to raise her social status by presenting as someone who did not align with traditional femininity and its presumed weakness. Though she does not explicitly mention Byron as the basis of her persona, she does describe herself as a gentleman, saying in 1820, "*Yet my manners are certainly peculiar, not all masculine but rather softly gentleman-like*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 152). Throughout her diaries, she pulls back from being completely masculine but rather performs the role of a gentleman in status, manners, and sexuality. Though some of her lovers like Marianna are put off by her explicit use of gentlemanly masculinity, many compliment her on it, with one of her early lovers Anne Belcombe saying that she "*had had an abuse for romance, enthusiasm,*

flattery, and manners like those of a gentleman, being too particularly attentive to the ladies” (6). The particular phrasing here implies a version of the gentleman that is very close to Byron as a charismatic libertine rather than the polished Austenian gentleman, and the former brought with it an inherent level of acceptance for transgressions of social norms. As with much of Lister’s public persona, this Byronic identity granted her the acceptability and power she needed to further her social agenda, but it went a step further than her other adopted identities. It allowed her to translate her queerness and masculinity into something that was not just acceptable but fetishized by British society.

This ability to translate her queer identity was incredibly important to Lister as there was one vital difference between her persona and Byron’s: where Byron’s isolation was mostly fabricated, much of Lister’s was genuine. She was physically removed from her community, as Shibden Hall and its sprawling estate were almost three miles outside of the proper town of Halifax, and, as mentioned earlier, the company available to her in Halifax was limited by her lack of social niceties. However, according to both her journals and letters, the area where she was most isolated was in her longing for genuine companionship. Though she masked her search for a partner under the guise of growing her assets through combining them with that of another wealthy woman, there are several moments throughout her writings that suggest she was not searching for financial comfort but for a cure to her constant loneliness. After Mariana’s marriage and before she married Ann Walker, Lister had several relationships, but none brought her more happiness than grief and many were unrequited. One of these was the courting period between herself and Miss Elizabeth Browne, towards the end of which she wrote, *“I cannot feel that she is, or ever can be, all to me I want & wish. Oh, that I had some kindred spirit & by whom,*

be loved... How sweet the thought that there is (still) another & better & happier world than this" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 113). This moment of both frustration and loneliness is one of the few cracks Lister shows in her journals. Throughout the majority of her writings, she portrays herself as an individualistic force to be reckoned with, one that can overcome any obstacle that lay in her path. But this moment shows her one weakness: an utter lack of companionship, either platonic or romantic. A few years later, over a decade before she would meet and marry Ann Walker, she showed another explicit moment of despair writing, "There is one thing that I wish for. There is one thing without which my happiness in this world seems impossible. *I was not born to live alone. I must have the object with me & in loving & in being loved, I could be happy*" (272). Shortly after this entry, she wrote to her friend, Sibella, saying, "Give me a mind in unison with my own, and I'll find the way of happiness – without it, I should feel alone among multitudes; and all the world would seem to me a desert" (qtd. in Green 87). This is not the plea of a woman whose scheme for financial security was foiled, but of someone who is desperate for some form of companionship. Her lonely anguish both in and out of relationships is a running theme throughout her journals and highlights a very specific question about queer community within Georgian society: What happens when an identity is undefined?

Though male homosexuality was criminalized by the British Parliament in 1533, Byron and other queer men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were able to claim spaces and communities of their own. Despite male homosexuality being clearly defined in social and legal spheres by the end of the eighteenth century, which brought with it a new level of organized persecution that had previously lacked clear means of

enforcement, communities formed in which queer men were accepted and protected both by each other and by compassionate friends and family (Crompton 33). Within these communities, personal writings from the period show that queer men were able to speak openly about their sexuality and even brag about their exploits, living in relative openness despite the danger waiting just outside their communal spaces (Crompton 14). Though it was a far cry from the communities seen today, male homosexuality had spaces, histories, and communities of which men like Byron were aware and in which they were welcomed and even encouraged to participate.

Female homosexuality, on the other hand, was neither legally nor socially defined during this period. As Jack Halberstam explored in “Perverse Presentism,” this lack of definition presents both challenges and advantages to queer historical studies in its inability to clearly define queer women and the multiple possible definitions it offers (46). The same applied to queer women’s lives during the period. The lack of legal and social definition in England meant that women who had sex with women were rarely prosecuted for sexual indecency, and when they were, contemporary thoughts and laws surrounding sex defined sex as an act requiring a penis and thus made it difficult to find women guilty of sexual contact (Bennett 6). Where this lack of definition benefited queer women legally, however, it also harmed them socially. With no formal way to define themselves and lacking a specific plight around which to build a community for the protection and acceptance seen in queer male circles, queer women were often alone in their discovery of their sexuality. Though her journals and letters show that she maintained both romantic and platonic relationships with other queer women throughout her life and that she had a broader knowledge of lesbianism in England and Europe

(Clark, “Anne Lister’s” 40), Lister was never part of any clear community of queer women. Her platonic relationships were disjointed and her sexual encounters stemmed primarily from what she saw as subtle clues and actions between her and the women she admired rather than from the established spaces and groups Byron alluded to in his writings and was known to inhabit.

This disparity in community, however, may explain Lister’s attempts to embody Byron within her public and private personas. Throughout her life, Lister used Byron’s writing as a mode of communication between herself and her potential sexual partners, taking an appreciation for his works, specifically *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, as a sign of possible compatibility (Steidele 77). She even noted that it was a controversial piece, saying, “Mrs. Waterhouse asked me afterwards if I had read *Don Juan*. I would not own it” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 147). In using Byron’s work as a form of coding, Lister shows that she recognized Byron as more than just a symbol of the gentleman that aligned with her nonconformity; she saw him as a distinctly queer figure that would translate to other queer people, and recent research has shown that this was likely a widespread interpretation of Byron.¹⁶ In their introduction to queer Romanticism, Michael O’Rourke and David Collings call Byron an “iconic figure for queer Romanticism” in everything from his overtly sexual and queer writing to his disability. Though identifiable queerness had not been widely codified like it is today, Lister was still able to distinguish Byron as someone outside of the heteronormative society in which she regularly operated, and by adapting his persona and shaping her own around it, Lister was not simply vying for acceptance in her local community but for

¹⁶ For more on Byron’s queer interpretations, see George, “Reification and the Dandy” and Jackson, “Least Like Saints.”

recognition within the queer one. Though her genderbending and gentlemanly persona granted her privileges more feminine women were denied, it also made her visible to other queer people, allowing her to hide in plain sight.

While Anne Lister's identity overlaps with ideas of Romanticism in multiple aspects, those in which she does not also warrant acknowledgement as they are often in direct opposition to Romantic ideas. For one, she was a "staunch traditional Anglican" (Liddington, *Presenting*) despite her surprisingly tepid religious invocations throughout her journals. Unlike William Blake and other Romantics who often believed in and wrote about God but were critical of organized religion, the handful of times Lister brings up the idea of God in her journals are nonchalant and secondary, with phrases like "*God knows what is best*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 19) and "*God knows how long that may be*" (16) ending her journal entries in which she is conflicted. In the published collections of her diaries, there are only a handful of explicit mentions of prayer, including one invocation on New Year's Eve 1822 in which she says, "God grant that I may go on improving in virtue, in happiness & in knowledge" (253). At the same time, however, she was adamant that she and Ann Walker had to take the sacrament together in order to make their marriage official, which they did on Easter Sunday in 1834 (Liddington, *Female Fortune* 100). She toured churches when traveling though rarely records attending services, she writes about reading the Bible in the same way she does other classical texts, and once she squared her sexuality with religion, she almost never brings up the concept of sin. This imbalance implies an inverse religiosity to what is normally associated with Romanticism where Lister seems to value the outward perception of religion more than the personal expression of it.

Alongside her enigmatic religious beliefs and practices, Lister was also a conservative Tory and life-long capitalist. Where many of the Romantics were supportive of the revolutionary spirit spreading through Europe during the period, Lister was very often opposed to the causes for which they were advocating. In the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre, for example, she was horrified by the violence but entirely dismissed the reasons for which the protesters attended, saying that one man with whom she discussed the tragedy was “evidently accustomed to read papers of an anti-ministerial turn – talks of taxation without representation and all the cant of the day” (qtd. in Liddington, *Presenting the Past*). Later, when she and Ann Walker jointly controlled their estates, they would regularly bully their male tenants into voting for conservative candidates and causes with threats of eviction depending on the public voting results (Liddington, *Female Fortunes* 243-244). In addition to her political views, she proudly participated in the coal industry by reopening old coal pits and sinking new ones on the Shibden estate that remained in operation until well after her death. All of this directly opposes the beliefs put forth by a significant number of Romantic writers who rallied behind causes for the working class and against the alienating effects of the Industrial Revolution.

However, these glaring oppositions to Romantic ideals support the idea that Lister purposefully used Romanticism to translate her identity as they show her using discretion to balance her personal expression with characteristics that were necessary for her survival within Georgian society. She could not afford to not be associated with the Church of England let alone criticize it as it would have risked exposing her to moral scrutiny. As a woman running an estate, supporting conservative politics gave Lister

more authority over her tenants, and the coal pits were the only means by which she could quickly grow the income of the estate. Conversely, bending her persona into one that mimicked Lord Byron granted her a level of protection in the form of celebrity and acceptable masculinity. Where conservatism granted her power and wealth through which she was able to maintain her independence, Romanticism offered Anne Lister a means to translate her personal identity, breaking through societal boundaries and creating the figure now known as Gentleman Jack, Lady of Shibden Hall.

CHAPTER III

The Lady of Halifax: Romanticism's Use of Queer Women

In 1825, Anne Lister wrote a letter to her friend Sibella Maclean. Unlike previous letters with Mclean in which Lister maintained her signature balance of objective details and brief personal accounts, this letter is uncharacteristically introspective. After offering a fleeting description of her most recent love interest, Lister's tone shifts suddenly with her writing, "Perhaps we none of us very well know ourselves; but I am as generally, and as equally cheerful and happy as most people I meet with, and am really and truly seldom more than five minutes in reconciling myself to whatever disagreeables [sic] may beset me" (qtd. in Green 87). The latter half of this statement is quickly undercut, however, by her declaration that "in solitude, a prison or a palace would be all alike to me" (87), and her melancholic tone only worsens when she reaches the main account of her letter: her most recent visit to the Ladies of Llangollen, Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby. Where her first visit three years earlier had been the happy culmination of Lister's growing fascination with the two women, her 1825 visit seems to have shattered her perception of the women who had captured the eyes of several Romantic writers. In the letter to Mclean, Lister writes, "[Miss Ponsonby's] first appearance struck me as much, and perhaps, as unfavorable as possible [...] Lady E. B(utler) I have never seen. She was once clever. What she is, it might be humiliating to inquire; for, in this world, minds, like bodies, do appear to wear out" (88). The account of her visit ends with her lamenting the publicity of the Ladies' decline into old age, saying, "Shall we decay as these have done, may there at last, remain some proud and haughty feelings of reserve, that bars us from the stare of strangers" (88). The sight of the Ladies aging so rapidly is

one that Lister clearly did not expect, and for her, it represents a dying hope for acceptance that she had seen in the Ladies since first hearing of them in her twenties.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Ladies of Llangollen and their story were widely recognized throughout England, Wales, and Ireland. They met shortly after Ponsonby's eighteenth birthday and quickly became close, brought together by the growing threat of futures out of their control. Ponsonby's family were in the process of arranging a marriage for her while Butler's were slowly forcing her to take the veil at a convent she had attended during her school years. As their correspondences continued through this increasingly hostile time, the two women began to plan their escape from their families' control, and in the summer of 1778 after one failed attempt, the two women left their homes in Ireland and began again in Wales. It was there that the two began to accrue recognition, first as local attractions and later as what several Romantic writers would call the epitome of romantic friendship. It was through this literary popularity and the subsequent national fame brought with it that Anne Lister became acquainted with the Ladies.

Unlike several of the Romantic writers who came across the Ladies, Anne Lister did not seem to view the two as romantic friends. Her first mention of them in her diaries is in conversation with her lover, Mariana, in which Mariana wished they had a secluded cottage like the Ladies of Llangollen (Whitbread 19), and when Lister finally visits Llangollen, she explicitly says in a letter to Mariana that she does not believe that the Ladies relationship is platonic: *"I cannot help thinking that surely it was not platonic. Heaven forgive me, but I look within myself & doubt. I feel the infirmity of our nature & hesitate to pronounce such attachments uncemented by something still more tender than*

friendship” (229).¹⁷ Lister’s interpretation of the Ladies’ relationship as “*something still more tender than friendship*” is significant because it offers a view into the ways in which queer women identified each other in a period in which they remained largely undefined by society and thus how Anne Lister attempted to identify herself. The fact that Lister and Mariana both seemed to have viewed the women as lovers rather than friends seems to have shaped Lister’s expression of her queer identity as she mirrored the two, specifically Butler, throughout her life. Like the Ladies, she was highly educated primarily through self-motivations, prided herself on her travel experience, and grounded herself within her extensive library. The three were also noted by those around them as being unusually masculine in both their manners of dressing and their general independence that was not expected of women, especially those of upper classes. Though Lister herself never explicitly notes these similarities as conscious decisions, her interactions with and admiration for the Ladies suggest that she and other queer women of the period recognized them as queer figures in which they could seek community.

Another appeal of the Ladies of Llangollen for Lister in particular is that, despite the public nature of their relationship, they were not just accepted by their local community but celebrated throughout England and within the current literary movement. Writers like Anna Seward and William Wordsworth dedicated poems to the two women who for Lister represented a form of same-sex marriage, and in doing so, these writers celebrated the exact kind of relationship Lister sought throughout her adult life in the art form for which Lister held the highest regard, literature. This appeal combined with her intense fascination with and emulation of the Ladies suggests that Lister may have seen

¹⁷ In transcriptions of Lister’s diaries, italicization is used to indicate when she is writing in code and the same is used in this manuscript unless otherwise specified.

in the Ladies a hope for acceptance within her own local community, even if she would not receive the literary renown Butler and Ponsonby enjoyed during their lifetimes.

However, since Lister's journals were rediscovered, there is significant evidence that Lister did gain a form of literary recognition and representation through the literature of the Brontë sisters, specifically Emily. From 1838 to 1839, Emily Brontë taught at Miss Elizabeth Patchett's school for girls at Law Hill just outside of the center of Halifax and less than two miles from Shibden Hall where Anne Lister resided as one of the most influential and recognizable figures in Halifax. Along with this proximity, Patchett was an acquaintance of Lister who regularly brought her students to the museum and events sponsored by the Literary and Philosophy Society of Halifax of which Lister was the first woman elected to serve on the board (Liddington, "Anne Lister" 53). There is also evidence that Patchett brought her students to Shibden Hall regularly ("Gentleman Jack") and that the Law Hill school and Lister reserved pews in the same local church (qtd. in Behrens), offering multiple opportunities for Brontë to cross paths with Lister in person. Though it is unclear whether or not Lister ever interacted with Brontë personally as she was "a consummate snob, so wouldn't 'know' school teachers" (@JillLiddington), it would be nearly impossible for Brontë to have not at least heard of Lister, especially since they shared close connections through several families in Halifax, including the Sowdens (Emberson 116). Even without this personal connection, however, Brontë would have heard comments about Lister who was a celebrity within Halifax as a businesswoman and as a local oddity, especially in the year in which Brontë resided in Halifax. Brontë's stay in Halifax was only a few years after Lister had unofficially married Ann Walker and the two combined their estates with the latter moving to Shibden Hall. This series of events

paired with the Walker family's objections caused a significant amount of chatter within the local community that Brontë almost certainly overheard. That overheard chatter would have told an intriguing story: a tall, dark, increasingly powerful figure within the community purposefully reshapes her image into that of a gentleman and in the process gains more power and wealth while simultaneously inheriting an old and secluded estate that by traditional standard would not have fallen into her hands. Though it is not a perfect comparison, the parallels between Anne Lister and *Wuthering Heights*' Heathcliff are difficult to ignore, especially in light of Brontë's own masculinity that mirrors Lister's.

Though there is no explicit evidence that Lister knew Brontë personally, Brontë scholars have begun connecting multiple aspects of *Wuthering Heights* to Anne Lister from Heathcliff's climb through the British class system to the gender-bending inherent in the doppelgänger characters of Heathcliff and Catherine.¹⁸ These connections infer that Lister may have inspired parts of *Wuthering Heights*, and if this is true, her literary representation in the late Romantic and early Victorian periods is emblematic of Britain's increasing conservatism and the ways in which the cultural shift affected queer women. Where the early Romantic period held up the relationship between Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby as an aspirational romantic friendship despite its queer nature, Emily Brontë and even her sister, Charlotte, represent Lister and her relationship with Walker as something darker and othered. Upon the publication of *Wuthering Heights*, readers were shocked and confused by Heathcliff as the hero of the novel to the point that, when Emily died, Charlotte revised and republished it with an introduction in which she minimizes

¹⁸ See Emberson and Emberson; Hughes; Kennard; Liddington, "Anne Lister and Emily Brontë"; and Hilda Marsden.

Heathcliff's role in the novel and instead emphasizes Lockwood, the incompetent narrator, and Edgar Linton, Heathcliff's cowardly rival. In doing so, Charlotte distanced the novel from the inherently queer nature of the story that was represented by Heathcliff as an othered character in everything from his race to his position in society to his gender fluidity, the latter two of which directly parallel Lister. By first representing Lister through an othered character and then minimizing that character's role after the novel's publication, the Brontës exemplify the cultural rejection of figures like Butler and Ponsonby and how that rejection affected the following generation of queer women like Lister. This connection of the *Ladies of Llangollen* to Brontë through Lister expands on recent scholarship connecting Lister and Brontë by examining the latter's adaption of Lister's queerness as both part of a larger literary tradition and an example of England's rising conservatism affecting that tradition. By tracing the public reception of the *Ladies of Llangollen* and comparing it to that of Anne Lister as a model for Emily Brontë's queer identity and characters, I argue in this chapter that the Romantic period's representation of these women conveys the growing hostility towards queer women as they gained recognition within society, and that this shift in public perception can explain Lister's hesitance to publish her own writing.

In order to understand this shift, however, one must first explore the story that initially fascinated the Romantic writers—the *Ladies of Llangollen*. Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby came from very different worlds. Ponsonby survived a tragic childhood, losing first her mother and then her father and two stepmothers by the age of thirteen, leaving her in the care of her father's cousin, Lady Betty Fownes. Soon after her arrival, she was sent to a boarding school, and it was here that she first met Eleanor Butler. The

Butler family was an old, prominent Catholic family, and Butler's father had recently inherited the Kilkenny Castle when Butler and Ponsonby first crossed paths. They met through Ponsonby's niece, who was hired to complete a portrait of Butler's father and had a mixed reaction to the then twenty-nine-year-old spinster, saying, "She could not be called feminine and she was very satirical" (qtd. in Mavor 5). However, Ponsonby was quickly won over by Butler, calling her "uncommonly handsome" (qtd. in Mavor 5). The two were assumed to have bonded over their shared love of literature, and in the five years in which they both resided in Kilkenny, they became inseparable. In May of 1773, Ponsonby at the age of eighteen returned to her cousin's home at Woodstock, and because the Fownes and Butlers were not particularly well acquainted, it is assumed that the two did not see much of each other during this period of separation. However, they maintained their relationship through correspondence, during which they discussed the possibility of leaving their respective families and striking out on their own in some way. It began as an innocent wish, but as the years passed and their families began planning for the future of their two unwed daughters, the plan became more and more serious. When it was decided by the Butlers that Eleanor, now in her thirties, would be returned to the convent in which she was schooled to take her vows and join the order, Butler and Ponsonby attempted an escape. However, they were foiled by an unknown confusion with the ferry they planned to take to England and were returned to the care of their families. A few months later, they made another escape attempt and this time, they were successful, arriving in Wales in 1778. After touring Wales for several weeks, the Ladies returned to the town of Llangollen and purchased a cottage where they lived together until Butler's death in 1829, before which they became local attractions tied directly to

the ongoing Romantic literary movement through both their personal connections and the quickly rising fame they gained for their unique story.

Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Ladies of Llangollen became a symbol of the Romantic movement with many of the major writers of the period visiting the small cottage and writing about the two charming women who inhabited it. Shortly before his death, the philosopher and writer Edmund Burke became a personal friend of the Ladies and even counseled them on suing a local publication in which one of the writers described Butler as “tall and masculine... and appears in all respects as a young man” despite her being a short, heavy woman in her fifties, among other pure falsities that outraged the women (Mavor 74-76).¹⁹ Lord Byron and his lover, Caroline Lamb, were also well acquainted with the Ladies. Lamb was a distant relative of Ponsonby on her father’s side and kept in touch with them throughout their lives in Llangollen, and Byron thought so highly of them that he sent them a complimentary copy of *The Corsair* in 1814 (176). Additionally, Byron was one of the few writers of the time who explicitly considered their relationship non-platonic, calling them “Sisters in Love,” comparing their relationship to those of lovers in classical literature as well as his own relationship with his Cambridge classmate, John Edleston (Brideoake “Extraordinary”). One of the most notable names to visit the Ladies and add to their growing fame was William Wordsworth. Wordsworth was especially fascinated by the Ladies as he believed that they represented a clear example of “romantic friendship,” a popular relationship ideal for the Romantics that was meant to transcend traditional friendships and romantic

¹⁹ The piece, according Mavor, contained several exaggerations and complete lies, but their main concern was the “innuendo of perversity” that the writer included by focusing specifically on the scandal caused by their escape from Ireland and highlighting the secluded nature of the women (74-75).

relationships. Wordsworth was so enamored by this increasingly popular model of a romantic friendship that he published the sonnet “To the Lady E. B. and the Hon. Miss P.,” in which he called their friendship, “a love allowed to climb / Ev’n on this earth, above the reach of time” (qtd. in Mavor 185). The poem was published in his next collection and pulled the Ladies further into the public eye where even more writers like Sir Walter Scott and Thomas de Quincey heard of and chose to visit them. However, unlike Wordsworth, Scott and de Quincey were less impressed. Scott implied throughout his discussions surrounding them that he viewed them as outdated relics of waning Romantic ideas, and de Quincey described them as “those sentimental anchorites of the last generation” (qtd. in Brideoake “Extraordinary”). Scott’s and de Quincey’s opinions of the Ladies do not seem to have been widespread among the Romantics of the time, but they are emblematic of a broader conversation that surrounded the Ladies of Llangollen.

As knowledge of their relationship spread throughout England, the Ladies of Llangollen were placed in a unique position of both beloved local symbols and points of confusion concerning the actual nature of their relationship. Throughout the majority of their lives in Llangollen, Butler and Ponsonby remained relatively uncontroversial figures within the community, viewed primarily as a quiet pair of friends known for their expansive garden and rigorous self-education endeavors. Their reputation was furthered by the Romantic works that praised the sacrifices the two women made for each other (Vicus, *Intimate Friends* 6), even when the relationship behind those actions seemed to have been misconstrued. For example, sixteen years after Ponsonby died and left their cottage empty, a sketch of the Ladies was published by a Welsh writer named John Hicklin under the title *The Ladies of Llangollen, as Sketched by Many Hands With*

Notices of Other Objects of Interest in that of Vales. Hicklin's first description of the Ladies sets the tone for the rest of the sketch as he writes, "these ladies, impelled by a desire to lead a secluded life of celibacy, forsook the gay and fashionable circles in which they had moved; and in their search for a fitting spot, on which to pass their days together in devoted friendship to each other, and in acts of benevolence and charity to their neighbours, they visited Llangollen" (2). This description, as with what follows it, oversimplifies much of what is now known to have made up the Ladies' lives together from their messy departure from Ireland in which they cut all ties to their immediate family members to the little but harsh backlash they received while living in Wales. Hicklin's sketch goes on to describe briefly the fame that they acquired during the nearly five decades in which they lived together before going into intense details about the property itself as well as a collection of anecdotes from other locals about the Ladies and the house. Throughout the rest of the sketch, Hicklin continues to place the Ladies and their histories behind the image of a pure friendship that was presented throughout the majority of their lives, and this tendency to ignore the inherent queerness of the Ladies' relationship continued into the early modern historical view of the two.

Because they were so well known throughout their lifetimes, the Ladies of Llangollen have become a permanent marker within the history of queer women in England, reclaimed like so many other figures after generations of silence. However, this reclamation did not begin until the past several decades, and it was often very hesitant. In her foundational 1979 biography of the Ladies of Llangollen, Elizabeth Mavor explicitly refused to define the women's relationship outside of calling it a romantic friendship, saying, "Yet for the purposes of studying and portraying a friendship so subtle and so

rare, the obvious Freudian interpretation seemed a blunty [sic] instrument, one at once oversimplified and too prone in its operation to give rise to that false Duessa of categorization which now obscures too much of individuality and interest” (xi). She goes on to say that the title of a romantic friendship allows room for multiple interpretations (xi-xii), and while this lack of definition and encouragement of different interpretations can be viewed as a means to purposefully avoid the queer nature of the Ladies’ relationship, it exposes one of the issues that comes with examining the history of queer women, and that is a clear absence of recognition and definition that both benefited and inhibited queer women.

The ambiguity that still surrounds the nature of the relationship between the Ladies of Llangollen is emblematic of the primary questions of the history of female homosexuality. How can one define relationships that for so long lacked definitions within their own community, let alone the larger heteronormative society? As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, the history of female homosexuality is much harder to trace than male homosexuality as the latter was much more widely discussed and portrayed throughout British society. Figures like Lord Byron and Horace Walpole before him openly made references to classical and French literature that contained forms of homosexuality within their works to express their own queerness in a way that was recognizable throughout society without being so overt as to demand legal action (Nicholson 140-141). Simultaneously, however, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, queer men were also threatened by this clear cultural definition as it served as the foundation for laws surrounding sodomy and other sexual acts, and traits like effeminacy were widely recognized as marking queer men by the beginning of the

nineteenth century (Trumbach 188). At the same time as this reinvigorated prosecution against queer men, the idea of how to identify and define queer women was undergoing yet another transformation within Britain. As Susan Lanser discusses in her article on the historical Sapphic body, beginning in the sixteenth century, women presenting themselves as masculine were equated with hermaphrodites, and this equation was extended to explain female homosexuality as it was assumed these women had some form of penis equivalents (“Queer to Queer” 23-24). Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this link became tenuous as scholars and laypeople alike began associating masculinity with sexual promiscuity on the part of women (25). This association is reflected in an increase in laws surrounding sexual immorality that placed male homosexuality closer to female adultery and prostitution within England’s legal system than to its female equivalent that marked what would later become the Romantic period (Trumbach 186-187). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, language surrounding queer women began to enter British society that implied a tepid acknowledgment of queer women, and these terms like “Saphhick” and “tommy” again began to correlate female masculinity with homosexuality (Lanser, “Queer to Queer” 38). Despite these terms gaining popularity especially around the period in which Anne Lister was actively looking for partners, they were not widely used enough to suggest a societal recognition of queer women, and lesbianism remained legally undefined and unregulated throughout the period (Derry 601).

It is within this historical context that Anne Lister lived and wrote, and while she maintained a clear and steady persona and queer identity throughout her adulthood, much of it was shaped by these realities. For example, throughout her writing, Lister cites

loneliness as one of her only ailments, especially since many of the women with whom she has relationships go on to marry men beginning with one of her earliest partners, Marianna. A few years later, Lister begins a relationship with Marianna's sister, Isabella (often referred to as Tib in her diaries) shortly before she, too, marries. In recalling a conversation with Isabella concerning both her and her sister's marriages, Lister writes, *"I said I often wanted a companion—someone to take care of me & now she was gone and there was no one I cared about."* When Isabella asks why Lister did not stop her from marrying, Lister responds, *"What could I do? You never asked me"* (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 81-82). The fact that this conversation concerns not just one but two of her partners marrying another person along with knowledge that this comes only a few weeks after her most recent lover, Elizabeth Browne, was engaged to be married, exemplifies how Lister and other queer women like her became dependent on romantic relationships to find queer community. According to her diaries, there is only one explicitly queer woman who Lister considered only a friend—Miss Pickford. Early on in their friendship, Lister states that she will not get romantically involved with Pickford, writing, *"She is better informed than some ladies & a godsend of a companion in my present scarcity, but I am not an admirer of learned ladies"* (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 259). Though Pickford expresses interest in Lister, the two remain friends for several years without any romantic entanglements. The fact that her friendship with Pickford was her only noted friendship with another queer woman shows that Lister along with other queer women of her time did not have stable queer communities that slowly built up throughout the latter half of the century and were instead dependent on short term relationships that often ended in heterosexual marriage.

It was likely because of her sparse and disjointed community with other queer people that Lister was so fascinated by the Ladies of Llangollen. The first mention of the Ladies in her available diaries comes in June of 1817 in which she recounts a letter from Mariana saying that she and her sister, Louisa, visited North Wales and met with the Ladies (Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 18). It is also here that Mariana mentions that she wishes the two had their own cottage. Lister does not agree as this letter appears at a time in which Lister is upset with Mariana. Despite this disagreement, both Lister and Mariana recognize the Ladies' cottage as a safe queer space. Mariana notes the cottage is a place for the two of them to live their lives together, and Lister regrets that this future for her and Mariana may be impossible: "*I now begin to think seriously that she & I will never get together*" (18). Later when Lister is finally able to visit Llangollen, she again asserts the space as decidedly queer, "I envied their place & happiness they had there" (222). This happiness that was so clearly expressed in the literary pieces devoted to the Ladies, despite the blurring of the details of their relationship, was part of what drew not just Anne Lister but also other women who sit somewhere on the spectrum of female same-sex desire to their door. For example, of the dozen or so names of note to grace the Ladies' cottage, Anna Seward was one of the writers with whom the Ladies seemed to have a genuine personal friendship, and she seemed to have interpreted the Ladies' relationship the same way Lister did. As Brideoake explores in her article on the Ladies of Llangollen and queer community, Seward seems to have been on the historical queer spectrum as evidenced by her close relationship with Honora Snyder, whose death Seward attributed to the husband she discouraged Snyder from marrying, her hesitance to marry, and her ongoing admiration for the Ladies of Llangollen. Though she is not as easily

defined as Lister, Brideoake argues that they both saw in the Ladies what was a marriage in all but law between two women. This was an ideal they had sought within their own lives and one that Lister eventually found, though it was not nearly as well received as that of the Ladies. Thus, by opening their home to the public and those who had influence over that public, the Ladies of Llangollen came to represent queer possibility in the nineteenth century and in doing so aided in building a small and disjointed but recognizable community of queer women.

For Anne Lister, however, the Ladies did not just represent an ideal to which she could look for hope and community; they offered yet another queer performance that Lister could mimic to make herself more recognizably queer without risking too much social scrutiny. One of the most prominent aspects of this performance was their use of masculinity. Aside from Ponsonby disguising herself as a man during their first attempt to flee Ireland (Mavor 26), both of the Ladies are noted throughout their time in Wales as almost always wearing riding habits. Though not inherently masculine, riding habits were usually made of thick, dark material that could withstand the wear of physical activity and regular washings, contrasting bluntly with the light and delicate fabrics that dominated women's fashion. Also, unlike popular styles, riding habits were inherently a mix of masculine and feminine pieces, consisting of a masculine-structured jacket usually worn with a cravat to hide the woman's chemise and other undergarments and a wide skirt usually worn over several petticoats (Crane 257). This blend of masculine and feminine was furthered as the riding habit was being used by women to claim more masculine appearances, with women sometimes pairing the jacket and cravat with trousers or wearing the full dress with top hats and men's shoes (256-257). Though there

are not examples of the Ladies of Llangollen wearing trousers, John Lockhart noted upon his visit to Llangollen that they were wearing “enormous shoes, and men’s hats” when he and Sir Walter Scott first saw them (qtd. in Mavor 198), suggesting that the Ladies were purposefully presenting more masculine. However, while they were dressing more masculine than was considered normal by nineteenth-century standards, it is important to note that like Lister, they did not dress in a way that would draw attention like that seen in the publication about them mentioned earlier suggesting perversity. Their use of masculinity was enough that it served to solidify their public image, which is still available on postcards and collectable in Llangollen, but not enough that they were seriously looked at as gender or sexual perverts during their lifetime.

In addition to providing a connection to an openly queer community like one Lister would not see again in England, the Ladies of Llangollen also offered hope for gaining acceptance within broader society, which Lister was denied first as a child and later as an adult in Halifax. Beginning in her school years, Lister was continually ostracized. Some of earliest writing excerpts come from her time at the Manor School,²⁰ an all-girls boarding school in York that she began attending at the age of 14. As soon as she arrived at the school, Lister was refused space in the dormitories and was instead sequestered to the attic which she shared with one other student, Eliza Raine (Steidele 17). Lister was barred from the dormitories due to her reputation as an uncommonly adventurous girl as well as for her family’s position at the lower end of the gentry class.

²⁰ These early writings are usually not considered part of her diary collection as they are mostly made up of notes between her and Eliza Raine and other students, letters to her family, or are written in the margins of school notes and books. These excerpts, along with other materials saved from Lister’s time at the Manor School, are kept by the West Yorkshire Archive.

Raine, too, was barred from the dormitories as she was half Indian (Hughes, *The Early* 10). The two became quick friends and then lovers, beginning a relationship that would last until well after Lister was removed from the school.²¹ Though the two became lovers and Raine remained one of the most influential relationships of Lister's life, this early seclusion set the tone for Lister's adult life, especially once she permanently moved to Halifax. Despite the fact that she was part of several social circles within the community, Lister bemoans the quality of company available to her in Halifax and this is only heightened when that company touches on her marital status. In an entry from 1819, Lister writes:

The Greenwoods said they heard I was going to be married to Mr George Priestly. They little know me. Talking afterwards of society, I said how I very much preferred ladies to gentlemen [...] The Greenwoods were vulgar as ever. I felt thoroughly ashamed of my company and upon the whole, I know not when I have paid a visit that has displeased me so entirely. (Qtd. in Whitbread 91)

This interaction with the Greenwoods happens in the middle of Lister's relationship with Elizabeth Browne, and from her reaction, it is clear that she is thoroughly frustrated by the implication that she is marrying a man. Though it is a brief statement, her attempt to dissuade the rumor of her marrying by stating that she preferred the company of women shows that Lister wanted to be recognized as something similar to the Ladies of Llangollen, a woman who enjoyed the company of another woman, and despite her masculinity and open admissions, she was not recognized as such.

²¹ The reason for Lister's removal from the Manor School is unclear. Some sources imply that her relationship with Raine was the cause, especially if her tomboyish disposition contributed to her staying in the attic. Other sources suggest that her family was no longer able to afford the school's fees.

The closest Lister would come to openly living the idyllic life of the Ladies of Llangollen was during her marriage to Ann Walker. Walker was a local heiress who had recently inherited a large portion of the family estate, Crow Nest. The two met briefly in 1817 when Walker was only thirteen (Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 24) and reunited in 1828 when the inheritance of Crow Nest was complicated by Walker's sister's marriage. Lister was asked by her friend, Mrs. Priestly, who was a cousin of Walker, to negotiate for the unmarried heiress who had been deemed mentally ill around the age of seventeen (Liddington, *Female Fortune* 32-36). Shortly before the conflict over Crow Nest, Lister had redoubled her efforts to find a long-term partner who could also offer financial support for the waning Shibden estate after several short-lived relationships. She expressed this need in a letter to Marianna earlier that year, writing, "The thought of exile from Shibden always makes me melancholy. [...] I am attached to my own people—they are accustomed to my oddities, are kind, are civilised to me... But... a great deal will, & must, depend on that someone known or unknown, whom I still hope to for as the comfort of my evening hour" (24). Lister's reunion with Walker, who was immediately intrigued by Lister, offered her exactly the opportunity for which she had hoped. Though the relationship began unsteadily, with Lister swinging wildly between affection and pity for Walker as she struggled with her mental health, 1834 saw them unofficially married on Easter Sunday when they took the Sacrament together after exchanging rings a few weeks earlier (100). In the time before their marriage, however, gossip surrounding the couple spread through the community, exacerbated by Walker's family's attempt to have her committed for her illness and claim her portion of the Walker estate. This gossip meant that the marriage became as close to public as such an undefined relationship could

within the nineteenth century, and with that publicity seems to have come a form of the wider recognition Lister sought.

In the midst of Lister and Walker's relationship and the gossip it spawned, one of the most well-known writers of the nineteenth century was entering social circles that were caught within the rumor mill. Before she published her widely acclaimed novel, Emily Brontë followed her older sister's lead by working as a teacher for a year in Halifax, and it was there that Brontë likely came across the queer figure of Anne Lister. Though there is no concrete evidence that the two ever came into direct contact, Lister was all but an omnipresent figure in Halifax and the surrounding areas in which Brontë spent much of her life up to this point. Additionally, as Ian and Catherine Emberson argue in their article exploring the links between the Listers and Brontës, "it is extremely unlikely that the Brontës had *not* heard of Anne Lister via the Sowden brothers," a family with whom both were personally entangled in everything from marriages to business dealings (116-117). Finally, the year that Brontë was living and working in Halifax followed one in which Lister with Ann Walker by her side was most active within the community soliciting votes for the Tory party (Liddington *Female Fortune* 243-244), a party in which Brontë's family was actively involved (Gaskell 80).²² These facts suggest that while there has been no mention of any member of the Brontë family found in Lister's diaries, Emily Brontë almost certainly knew of Anne Lister and was thus likely influenced by her as well.

²² According to Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë, Charlotte was a Tory (8), and their father was an active member of the party who often carried a loaded pistol to defend himself against Luddites who vandalized businesses in protest of Tory-proposed labor and trade laws (80-81). Though there is no evidence that Emily herself identified as a Tory, her family's participation in the party would have at least made her aware of Tory politics.

As Lister shaped her identity around that of the Ladies of Llangollen, Emily Brontë seems to have mimicked some of Lister's most recognizable traits, namely her use of masculinity. While there is very little known for certain about Brontë's personal life due to her sister, Charlotte, destroying most of her diaries and letters after Emily's death, one fact that survived Charlotte's censorship was that Emily was notably masculine. Those around her made statements like "Emily was also very much a Catherine/Heathcliff" and "She early knew the boy in herself, and later knew the man. Others knew it too" (qtd. in Kennard 22), and most of these comments were made after the year she spent in Halifax. One of the clearest examples of Emily's masculinity is Charlotte's novel, *Shirley*, the title character of which is a distinctly masculine woman who Charlotte based on Emily (22). It is this novel of the Brontë sisters' works that is most often compared to Anne Lister as Shirley and Lister share several characteristics, including taking on masculine nicknames. Shirley goes by "Esquire." Lister goes by "Gentleman Jack" and "Fred" or "Freddy." Something more notable, however, is that Emily Brontë adopted the name "The Major" after it was given to her by her father's curate, Willie Weightman (Kennard 22). Whether or not Brontë ever had romantic relationships with women or sat somewhere on the historical spectrum of female same-sex desire, Lister was a public example of a woman claiming power and autonomy through masculinity, and as Brontë likely came into contact with her early in her adulthood, it is reasonable to assume that Lister influenced Brontë's masculine identity.

Even if Lister did not directly influence Brontë's identity, the parallels between Lister and *Wuthering Heights* are significant and worthy of exploration. As Jill Liddington explores in her article on the connections between Brontë and Lister, the

similarities between the ancient, secluded Shibden Hall and the mysterious Wuthering Heights have been accepted by many scholars to be too close for mere coincidence but rather suggest that Brontë was partially inspired by the Lister family estate (“Anne Lister” 47). The similarities do not end at the estates themselves; the owners of these two iconic houses are also suspiciously alike in their positions and the ways in which they were able to claim them. Heathcliff, as an adopted child rather than a legitimate son, is not meant to inherit Wuthering Heights but instead must fight to gain control of the estate, often through legally ambiguous means. Lister, too, was not the intended heir of Shibden Hall and only came to control it through first outliving all other male heirs and then by slowly taking over management of the estate until the deaths of her aunt and uncle which finally granted her complete ownership. It is also important to note that they both intentionally fashioned gentlemanly personas that they then used to wield their unsuspected power. As discussed in the previous chapter, Lister carefully constructed an androgynous persona that was modeled after the nineteenth-century gentleman, and Heathcliff undergoes a similar transformation in the novel. Though he begins as a wild and uncontrollable child, by the time he returns to Wuthering Heights after Catherine unintentionally rejects him, he plays the role of a learned gentleman so well that Isabella becomes infatuated and runs away with him. His marriage to Isabella also aids his performance of a gentleman as her quick decline upon moving to Wuthering Heights stands in stark contrast to his careful composure. This is confirmed when Nelly, his most vocal critic, says upon seeing him, “He was the only thing there that seemed decent: and I thought he never looked better. [...] he would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman” (Brontë 182). Nelly’s observation in this moment highlights the

performative nature of Heathcliff's role as a gentleman as Nelly specifically says that it is among the chaos of *Wuthering Heights* that Heathcliff appears a gentleman. It is a similar caveat to the one Mr. Lockwood makes when he first meets Heathcliff: "He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has a handsome figure" (6). Like Nelly, Lockwood is emphasizing that Heathcliff only appears to be a gentleman, and that appearance is aided by his careful positioning within the estate. Despite the narrators' focus on the dishonesty of his position, Heathcliff's ability to perform a version of the nineteenth-century gentleman guaranteed him a level of control of those around him as well as his ownership of *Wuthering Heights*, and that same performance is what gave Lister the power Brontë would have seen her wield throughout Halifax.

Another intriguing connection between Lister and *Wuthering Heights* is Brontë's use of doppelgänger characters and how she purposefully combined Heathcliff and Catherine in famous lines like Catherine's exclamation, "I *am* Heathcliff" (102). Throughout the novel, the two characters become increasingly dependent upon each other and a surprisingly non-sexual relationship begins when they are children forced into each other's company. By Catherine's death, they are so thoroughly consumed by each other that Heathcliff exclaims, "I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul" (209). As Helen Moglen argues in her article on doubling in the novel, Heathcliff and Catherine become entirely dependent upon each other for the identity that they built together as children, and when they are forced to separate, they are fragmented as if they are separated from themselves (394-395). This was a tactic also used by Mary Shelley in

Frankenstein, but the difference is that where Shelley spread this doppelganger effect across multiple characters, Brontë focused it on two, specifically a man and a woman. At the time that Brontë was writing, this doubling of characters was a popular technique in French novels exploring same-sex desire using the “sexual inversion” theory that connected androgyny to homosexuality (Kennard 20-21). Novels like Henri de Latouche’s *Fragoletta* and Théophile Gautier’s *Mademoiselle de Maupin* use “either one character who adopts both male or female roles or, as in *Wuthering Heights*, two characters, one male and one female, who clearly invite us to read them as halves of one person” (20). This creates an androgynous, gender-bending effect on the part of these two characters. In using this technique, Brontë created an inherently queer story in which the boundaries of gender and sexuality are blurred,²³ and she would have seen a version of this blurring playing out in Halifax during her time there in the androgynous, powerful, and increasingly wealthy form of Anne Lister.

The possibility of Brontë taking inspiration from Anne Lister is important because it is emblematic of two unavoidable realities that must be considered when examining Lister’s writings; first, in comparing *Wuthering Heights* to works inspired by the Ladies of Llangollen just a few years earlier, it exemplifies an increase in hostility towards queer people in England and how that hostility affected queer women. Though Heathcliff is now one of the most widely recognized Byronic characters of literature, he was initially received with horror. Charlotte Brontë called him “unredeemable” in her editor’s preface published with the 1850 edition, writing, “Whether it is right or advisable to create beings

²³ To varying extents, the blurring of lines in gender and sexuality as well as sexual transgressions in general became part of the gothic genre in the nineteenth century. For more on sexuality in gothic literature, see Anolik, Eberle-Sinatra, and Hurley.

like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is" (xxxv-xxxvi). Catherine, too, is dismissed with only a few brief mentions in the introduction, as Charlotte turns the reader's attention to another character: "For a specimen of true benevolence and homely fidelity, look at the character of Nelly Dean" (xxxiv). This censoring of the novel and later Emily's personal writings suggests that Charlotte recognized the queer nature of both the story and Emily and decided that it was better to destroy it than allow Emily's reputation to be stained. If Catherine and Heathcliff are inspired by Lister, it would mean that Lister's literary influence created characters so abject to the reading public that Charlotte felt the need to distance the story from them in order to make the story palatable in the nineteenth century. This reception contrasts blatantly with the treatment the *Ladies of Llangollen* received from the early Romantics with their queer romantic friendship serving as an ideal that was actively sought by figures like Anne Lister and is emblematic of a societal shift into the conservative Victorian period. This period brought with it a new level of sexual puritanism that refocused sex on procreation and deemed other sexuality abnormal and objectionable (Foucault 3-4). As gender and gender performance was quickly being tied to sexuality through the theory of sexual inversion, those who varied from strict norms were becoming objectionable, and this included queer women and the literature that represented them. Thus, over the course of just under fifty years, queer women went from being muses of Romanticism to inspiring characters that were so othered by the reading public that they were nearly dismissed from their own stories.

The second reality that Emily Brontë's use of Lister shows is the advantage Lister gained in her relative anonymity outside of Halifax and its surrounding areas. Though she

expressed interest in publishing and even sent a manuscript of her time in Paris to a family friend for review (Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 126), she never actually published her work. Because of this, Lister and her personal life never garnered widespread recognition or investigation like the Ladies of Llangollen or Emily Brontë. As idyllic as the lives of the Ladies of Llangollen were, they, too, fell out of favor by the end of their lives. Shortly after Wordsworth published his poem about them, he transitioned into social conservatism, during which time he disavowed several of his original views concerning the Romantic movement, and the younger generation of Romantic writers began to view the women as relics of early Romanticism (Brideoake “Extraordinary”). Despite the confusion caused by her relationship with Walker, Lister never lost any significant social circles nor did her reputation ever interfere directly with her business dealings, a security that would not have been guaranteed to her had her writing been published. After Brontë’s death, huge swathes of her personal life and identity were destroyed by her own sister for the sake of her legacy, and the same would have likely happened to Lister had she garnered widespread interest. Her limited circle of influence meant that Lister’s life was not subjected to the same censorship as Brontë’s, and even when her diaries were discovered several decades after her death, John Lister was able to hide rather than destroy them as there was no reason for others to come looking for them.

It is through this relative anonymity that Anne Lister was ultimately granted the wish she expressed to Sibella in 1825. There were no strangers from which she had to bar her death, though there was hardly a decline to watch. She suddenly died of fever at the age of forty-nine in Russia, far away from any prying eyes and attempting to make her

way south to see the Orient of which she had read for years. Ann Walker, her wife of six years, was by her side, a true companion in her “evening hour.” Though she did not gain the recognition as a writer for which she had hoped during her lifetime, it was likely because of this lack of recognition that her writings and legacy survive.

CHAPTER IV

Posthumously Romanticized: Anne Lister as a Romantic Writer

On 22 December 1819, Anne Lister's diary entry details the sending of a letter that totaled seventy-one quarto pages to Mr. and Mrs. Duffin, who were close family friends and the guardians of Lister's first lover Eliza Raine. In usual fashion, Lister begins the diary entry by recounting her looking over the letter as a whole, the time at which she sent the parcel along with its introductory note, and her own lateness in sending it off. The letter itself is a highly detailed account of her time in France earlier that year, marking her earliest trip to the Continent after the end of the Napoleonic wars (Whitbread, *No Priest* 13). Like the letter to Sibella mentioned in the previous chapter, however, the latter half of the diary entry that discusses her sending the letter off turns towards introspection as she writes, "I am heartily glad it is finished & gone. It has been a sad, tedious concern but I hope I have learnt something during the time spent in writing it. At least I have gained a valuable turn towards a habit of patient reference & correction which, should I ever publish, may be of use to me" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 126). This is not the first nor the last time Lister will mention her publishing aspirations, but it marks her discussing an independent manuscript and one of the only times she notes finishing a writing project separate from her diaries and other letters. Even in her own introduction to the letter, Lister calls it "much more like a tiresome journey-book, than a letter" (qtd. in Green 40), and that definition applies not just to the length of the letter but to the writing style itself. Lister's writing in this work is markedly different from her diaries and other letters as she plays into tropes of travel writing through accounts of extreme detail that fit within her clear narrative. Where the uncoded sections

of her diaries are filled with accounts that feel disjointed despite the details they offer, this manuscript reads as a narrative rather than an archival document. For example, during her extended visit to France a few years later, one of her diaries recounts one of her early days almost entirely in disjointed, incomplete sentences:

Went to a milliner's shop in Rue de Castiglione. Black gros de Naples bonnets, 22 to 28 francs each... Then downstairs a little in the dining room with M. & Mme de Boyve & a Mlle de Sans – French but born in England, who speak both languages equally well. Out of health. Pale and rather interesting in appearance.
(qtd. in Whitbread, *No Priest* 30)

This purely archival style of writing compares starkly to the detailed and sequential but still narrative writing of her letter to the Duffins in which dedicates the first page entirely to the time between their arrival in France and the point at which they reach their hotel (Green 41-42). It is because of this narrative style that Lister adopts when writing the letter that it stands out from the rest of her work as a complete manuscript.

Though the letter, according to Lister, is written as one continuous narrative without sectioning or major editing, it follows a specific narrative structure often seen in travelogues. She begins with a description of her hotel and noting the variety of experiences she is going to detail: “Our only anxiety was to make the best use of our time and see everything, or at least, out of such an abundance of objects worthy of attention and, as soon learnt to acknowledge, or admiration, to select those of most general notoriety and importance” (42). From there, she goes on to begin recounting her and her aunt's early days in Paris, including their trips to the Louvre, the Tuileries Palace and its gardens, and other tourist attractions around the city center, all in extreme detail. Though

there are a few moments in which she breaks her account to describe her process of writing, these, too, are directly connected to her experience in Paris as she attributes any abnormalities in her writing to the process of remembering the details of the city:

I do assure you that, amid so hasty a survey of such a multiplicity of objects, the mental records of an experienced tourist, are naturally subject to a little confusion of arrangement that it would take more time to methodize, than I had any idea of six or eight months ago. To write at the time what you have seen today or yesterday, is one thing; it is another to sit down after your return home, not knowing where, or with what to begin. My mind with its crowd and jumble of ideas, is like a coffer full of ballots; I put my hand in, as it were, and chance alone determines which, and what sort of one, comes first. (45)

Despite this disclaimer, the letter never truly breaks from its narrative, slowly expanding out from Lister and her aunt's point of origin within the city and extending into its outskirts before coming to her final remarks in which she details their departure from France. Despite her noted frustrations, Lister ends her account saying, "*I have had a double pleasure—that of visiting the place which of all others I most wished to see, and of dwelling thro' so many pages on the thought and remembrance of those friends whose early kindness will never lose its record on my heart*" (54).²⁴ Aside from its introductory note and these final words to the Duffins, the letter could easily be mistaken for a publishable manuscript matching those that made up a considerable amount of Lister's library.

²⁴ Italicization is from the text, though its purpose is not indicated by Green.

This manuscript, though highly praised by the Duffins upon receiving it,²⁵ is never published by Lister, nor are any of her other collections of writing until almost a century and a half after her death. As discussed in the previous chapters, there were a variety of circumstances that likely contributed to her decision to not publish any of her writing. While women's writing makes up approximately half of the work published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, those who did publish were often met with resistances, and Lister's position within Halifax was already tenuous due to her being a woman. Pushing further against gender norms would have threatened the unstable power she had gained, especially since she was in her twenties and thirties when she spoke most often about publishing. It was not until her late thirties that Lister officially gained complete control of Shibden, and despite the power gained in the years prior, her position in her early adulthood was unsteady without her complete inheritance as her uncle could at any time reclaim the responsibilities Lister had taken on or choose another heir entirely. Alongside this positional instability, there also remained the threat that if she were well-received by the reading public, Lister's personal life could earn unwanted attention and force her to censor her identity in a way that she did not need to throughout her adult life. However, a more concrete reason is mentioned by Lister herself on multiple occasions, including in the introduction to the manuscript in which she writes, "On a second reading of my pages, I should have buried them for ever [sic] in my writing desk" (41). It is believed that Lister destroyed several of the pieces of her writing she

²⁵ In his reply, Mr. Duffin wrote: "I have read only a few pages of your tour, it is too precious to devour all at once, I am delighted with it and shall preserve it as a Guide should I ever visit Paris" (qtd. in Green 40).

considered publishing²⁶ as she wrote often about reading small pieces to family and friends, but never spoke of them again other than to express embarrassment or regret like that seen in this quote. Throughout her diaries, it is clear that Lister was her own worst critic and often viewed her own works and actions with a particular harshness. Thus, in addition to the very real societal risks Lister would have experienced had she published, her first major obstacle would have been her own criticism.

However, throughout her diaries, there is evidence that despite her own hesitance to publish, Lister wrote her diaries and letters with the intention that they would one day see a wider audience. She never truly hid any of her diaries throughout her life, which led to John Lister finding and decoding them after her death. Part of this was likely due to her belief that the code behind which she hid her more personal and scandalous entries was indecipherable by the majority of people who would come across her diaries, but this faith in the code is undercut by the sheer number of cypher keys she wrote and circulated among her lovers and admirers throughout her life. This distribution of her code created an entire, albeit disconnected, community of queer women who had a means to not just read Lister's accounts of her queer identity but also to communicate their own identity in a private manner (Rowanchild, "My Mind" 202). The widespread knowledge of her code suggests that Lister did not see her diaries as an entirely private collection but rather a means to translate her identity to an audience. Though a more public audience for her diaries began as other queer women with whom she had personal relationships, her own view of the diaries also suggest that she wanted to believe that they would serve as an account of her and her life long after she was gone. For example, in 1819, she writes, "I

²⁶ Jill Liddington notes in *Presenting the Past* the discovery of a list of burned letters in her desk from 1822 (54).

am resolved not to let my life pass without some private memorial that I may hereafter read, perhaps with a smile, when Time has frozen up the channel of those sentiments which flow so freshly now” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 94). This statement, however, is not coded, as are most of the contents of her diaries. Only about a sixth of her diary entries are written in code and that which is coded is almost always directly speaking about her sexuality, her appearance, and her opinions of others. The rest is left uncoded and out in the open, an only semi-private memorial, and even that which was more private behind the code still had a relatively large group privy with the means to read it.

Aside from her intentions to publish, Lister’s writing fills in significant gaps within the genres and traditions into which it would have fallen had she published within her lifetime: travel writing and life-writing. Her travel writing falls cleanly within the techniques of other popular travelogues of the period and tends to use the Romantic ideal of the traveler rather than the more common trope of the tourist. However, Lister’s position as a woman writing in a highly gendered genre sets her apart from the writers with whom her works align. Where gender normally divides the ways in which travel writers characterize themselves within their writing with women often taking a more passive role in the narrative and men claiming an active role, Lister moves between the two, shifting the focus back and forth between herself and the places in which she is traveling. As for her diaries, Lister continues to strike a balance between upholding and breaking common life writing techniques for women writers of the period by using different types of subjectivity. Even without her change in subjectivity, however, Lister’s coding of her diaries creates a duality in the narrative her diaries tell, and this split in the

narrative offers a unique insight into the line between public and private. These distinctive styles of writing in both Lister's travel writing and life-writing are significant as they make all of Lister's writing uniquely queer. Lister's writings therefore do not just detail queer history but exemplify queer narrative in a period that sorely lacks such styles. It is because of Anne Lister's inherently queer style of writing that she contributes significantly to study of Romanticism by offering a new approach to life and travel writing.

The foundation for Anne Lister queer style of writing pulls directly from one of the most popular genres of the Romantic period: travel writing. Travelogues and other forms of travel writing made up a significant portion of Lister's personal library as well as many libraries throughout England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the Romantic period now is defined by its poetry and novels, it also marked a significant boom in travel writing and a time in which the genre dominated the publishing industry. Major writers like Sir Walter Scott published multiple travelogues and travel guides, and Lord Byron's first major work, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, served as a fictional travelogue of Byron's own travels. Even those without previous literary notoriety were able to succeed within the genre, and writers like Mary Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft used the genre as a point of transition into other literary forms (Fay 74). The genre's popularity in especially the nineteenth century was due to the convergence of several cultural shifts and innovations in England. Part of the appeal of travel writing was that there still remained huge swathes of the globe that were uncharted by English explorers, and travel writing both drove and fed the spirit of discovery in its writers and readers (Youngs 2). To a certain extent, travel during this period was spurred on by resources

within those uncharted areas that were often taken by force through colonization, which were then justified through racial ideologies represented explicitly in travel writing (2).

Though Lister never traveled to areas of European colonial expansion, one of her early letters suggests that Lister at one point held English nationalistic ideals as she ends a letter to her brother who was fighting in the Napoleonic Wars, “I feel the glow of patriotic zeal” (qt. in Green 39). Surprisingly, however, by the time Lister arrives in France a few years later, she lacks the language of English superiority that filled many English writers’ accounts of the Continent. Throughout her manuscript, for example, she compares England and France with an even hand, stating on one outing that she preferred the gardens of England but “the atmosphere incumbent over Paris was almost perfectly clear, while that over our own capital might have served Homer to represent the smoke of Vulcan’s forge” (44). Even though Lister does not directly participate in the nationalistic colonial drive of travel in the nineteenth century, major writers of the Romantic period did. William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, and Mary Russell Mitford among others published works that glorified newly ‘discovered’ lands as paradises untouched by the corruption of modern life, and these depictions enticed tourism to exotic destinations (Johnson 184).

Aside from colonization, however, one of the largest cultural changes that popularized travel writing in England was the end of the Napoleonic wars which opened the Continent in 1815. Once Europe was once again open, the Grand Tour culture in England was replaced by a new tourism industry in which a wider population was able to participate due to the evolution of transportation and improved working conditions for the growing middle classes (6). For those who were unable to participate in the tourism

industry, travel writing served as “an affordable, if not imaginative rather than substantial, substitute for the elite experience” of tourism that marked the upper class and fascinated lower social circles (Fay 73). Because of this class divide, travel writing itself became a necessity within tourism as guidebooks were in high demand. More romanticized pieces provided a form of advertising that drew scores of people into the Continent and new colonies and kept those who were not able to travel captivated by the stories travel writers brought back with them.

Despite the breadth of the tourism industry, the act of traveling and ways in which people did it became points of debate within British society, and one of the major points of contention for the Romantics specifically was the difference between touring and traveling. With tourism bridging part of class divide by opening to anyone with free time and extra income, a new divide opened between “tourist” and “traveler,” the latter being those who immersed themselves in the places to which they traveled. It was not long after the industry began growing in England that “the word tourist almost immediately took on a negative connotation and the individual traveler was to be transformed into the individualistic anti-tourist” (Parrinello 89), and this shift was spurred on by the Romantic writers’ individualistic approach to travel. This individualism’s involvement Robin Jarvis calls Romantic travel works paradoxically with the Romantics’ desire “to blur the distinction not only between humans and animals but between organic and inorganic matter—to represent, indeed, the unifying force in all nature” (“The Glory” 80). Through the more individualistic traveler mentality, Romantics intended to fully integrate themselves into the places they traveled and thus gain a deeper connection to those places than that of the common tourist. Writers like Alfred de Vigny, Thomas de Quincey, and

Lord Byron were especially known for writing about these fully immersive travel experiences that focused on “unprogrammed, nonchalant itineraries; the suggestive magic of distance and wildness; the excitement of tactile engagement; [and] the equation of strangeness with authenticity” to create an immersive travel experience (Cardinal 147). This immersive experience was not easily replicated by casual tourists, and thus it became a distinct line between Romantic travelers and tourists.

In her travel writing, Anne Lister tends to fall on the traveler side of this divide. Her extended stay in Paris from the end of 1824 to mid-1825 is an example of Lister’s dedication to immersing herself in the places she visited. Though there is not a complete manuscript of this second visit to France, Lister’s diaries keep a detailed account of her time in the city, including her widening her knowledge of the French language with one of her housemates and her simultaneous flirtations with two of women with whom she was staying. Between French lessons and coded entries detailing her relationships with her housemates, she makes clear attempts to understand French culture beyond an English tourist perspective. One of the earliest examples of this is when she attends a French play in October and describes the foreign style of performance thoroughly before noting at the end of the entry, “Surely all this would have seemed ridiculous to most English people but appeared to highly delight the French” (qtd. in Whitbread, *No Priest* 51). In this closing remark, Lister does not claim the cultural understanding of the French nor the confusion of the English but rather places herself somewhere between the two. Though her focus for long stretches of her diaries from this period lies on her relationship with her housemates, the entries in which Lister details Paris show her integrating herself

into the culture as traveler, and this mindset is indicative of Lister's queer style of writing.

An important aspect of travel writing as a genre that applies directly to Anne Lister is that the genre was dominated by women writers and readers. Though male Romantics like Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth occasionally published within the genre, women's writing "contributed significantly to broader cultural understanding" as women writers had to fit within expectations that their male counterparts did not and thus often wrote highly detailed accounts about different societies' gender roles and experiences (Fay 78). Part of what made women's travel writing so distinct from their male counterparts' writing was the fact that women writers were assumed to "become more absorbed by her own individual authentic responses than she is concerned to portray the culture which she temporarily belongs" (Mulligan 4). Thus, women writers are forced to write highly detailed accounts of their travels in order to convince their readers of the truth of their accounts by "taking pains to describe scenes realistically, often supplementing their accounts with sketches" (qtd. in Mulligan 5).

This focus on detail compared starkly to their male counterparts who "documented their heroic explorations and discoveries, or their political trade missions to far distant countries" while "women writers were read for the discerning details they could provide about customs, dress, architecture, markets, music, and food" (Fay 76). This difference in focus reflects a larger trend in Romantic writing styles noted by Anne K. Mellor in *Romanticism and Gender*. Mellor suggests a spectrum of "masculine" and "feminine" writing styles centering around subjectivity with the former adhering more to an "ego versus non-ego" binary style and the latter "resist[ing] this model of oppositional

polarity” (3). According to Mellor, writers’ genders did not define whether they used a stable masculine subjectivity or a fluid feminine subjectivity, and they often moved along the spectrum depending on their works. However, she does assert that many Romantic writers aligned more with their gendered style of writing aside from a few notable exceptions like Emily Brontë and John Keats.

This space between masculine and feminine writing styles is particularly important within travel writing as the subjectivity of the author often shaped the narrative. The fluidity of feminine Romantic writing allowed women writers to take a more passive role within their travel narratives and offer a more decentralized perspective of the cultures and places about which they were writing (Fay 76). This technique of using passive subject as a narrator was part of what appealed to audiences as it allowed readers to place themselves within the narrative, and even writers like Lord Byron whose work was distinctly anxious of a femininely fluid self used some of the techniques of women writers to destabilize other aspects of his narratives (Mellor 158-159). For example, though Childe Harold remains a stable subject as a representation of Byron within the narrative, the events and circumstances surrounding him create the effect of instability that would have been recognizable to a wide audience.

Anne Lister in her travel writing goes a step further than Byron and other travel writers in combining masculine and feminine Romantic writing styles by continually moving between passive and active subjectivity within her writing. The pattern through which she achieves this usually begins in her describing an event or place with only minimal mentions of herself and her reactions to it and then using a detail of her description to segue into establishing herself within the situation. She does this in her

manuscript when she describes the Tuileries Palace and Gardens as she begins with a long description of the Palace and then the Gardens in which she compares the Gardens specifically to those seen in England. This comparison sets up a description of her and her aunt's assimilation into the French culture: "It was here, however, that we soon learnt to sit or saunter like the rest – to enjoy the verdant canopy that shaded off the blinding glare of the sun, and to pay our two sols apiece for chairs, and the like sum per paper for half an hour or an hour's reading of the *Moniteur*" (qt. in Green 42-43). It is important to note that her assimilation goes a step further than other women travel writers in that she claims to be a part of Parisian culture through it, once again showing a traveler rather than tourist mentality. It is softened by her extended descriptions, but Lister's claim to "saunter like the rest" is closer to Byron's claims to cultures in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan* and other male writers like him. The blend between masculine and feminine subjectivity in Lister's travel writing is more apparent later in the manuscript following directly after her musings on the difficulties of writing her account after the fact. After she poses the issue of what she will pull from the coffer of her memories, she lands on her description of the time she and her aunt visited a graveyard and came across a funeral. Her description of the funeral begins objectively with her focus on the details of the procession, the coffin, and the mourning father who, after the coffins were lowered into the grave "cast one long look behind at the last farewell of his daughter, and quietly walked off alone" (46). Once the father leaves, Lister's description begins to include her and her aunt as active observers of the cemetery, asking questions about the history of the place and Lister offering her own guesses as to the ways in which graves were distributed in the limited space. However, while this active positioning

within the description is markedly masculine, the latter half of it is written in second person, “As you ascend the hill, you get among the resting places of the separate individuals” and “From these, as you still advance, you in every sense of the word reach the higher regions of the dead” (46). This is a sudden shift in perspective from Lister’s active theorizing to one in which she is not only passive but removed from the description altogether. In completely removing herself, Lister rebalances her masculine and feminine subjectivity into one that becomes neutral and allows the reader to see directly through her writing.

While Lister’s movement between active and passive subjectivity within her travel writing is a testament to her talent as a writer, her unique position within society is the reason she is able to move between those perspectives in real life. Throughout her diaries, Lister is very clear that she often travels without any companion other than one or two servants. While in Paris in 1824, one of her housemates comments on the fact, suggesting “*taking the name of mistress if [she] travelled alone*”²⁷ when Lister discussed her long term plans (qtd. in Whitbread, *No Priest* 28). When Lister does bring a traveling companion, it is almost always a woman with whom she has had a romantic relationship, including Mariana, Ann Walker, and Maria Barlow, a widow she meets and flirts with during her stay in Paris. Though by the middle of the nineteenth century women were traveling alone in Europe, it gradually increased throughout the century following the opening of the Continent (Mulligan 4). At the time that Lister was traveling, it was still unusual to see a lone woman traveling, even with a servant or two in tow. However, as first the heir and then the head of the Shibden estate, Lister had not just the financial

²⁷ In transcriptions of Lister’s diaries, italicization is used to indicate when she is writing in code and the same is used in this manuscript unless otherwise specified.

means to travel but also the independence. As discussed in Chapter 1, Lister's independence came from her lack of a husband as, had she married, Lister's property rights would have been passed to her husband (Choma and Wainwright ix). Lister's independence when traveling brought with it an independence from some of the social norms that constrained other women travel writers. Without a husband who was expected to take charge on the trip and plan it before hand, Lister was able to claim control and subjectivity, and this is reflected in her writing. When she writes about going to Paris, for example, the only other feedback she receives is from her aunt, and even that is never implied to hinder her plans: "Spent all the evening talking to my aunt... *about going to France [...] My aunt is really good in giving in to all my wishes & says she will save money. No objection to my going by myself but the fear of my being ill. May perhaps go with me herself. I calculate forty pounds for our travelling expences [sic] & twelve or fifteen for three weeks in Paris*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 97). This exchange shows that Lister is in control of the trip from its first discussion, placing herself in a position in which she can claim a stable subjectivity as well as the freedom to move between masculine and feminine throughout her travels.

Anne Lister's use of subjectivity in her writing becomes even more apparent within her diaries and other life-writing works as she works within the tropes of the genre. Similar to travel writing, life-writing rose to popularity towards the end of the eighteenth century and remained popular throughout much of the nineteenth century. However, where travel writing often falls into either travel narratives or guidebooks, life-writing consists of several subgenres including biography, autobiography, diaries, and memoirs to name a few, and a lot of these subgenres were solidified and popularized in

the Romantic period, the most notable being that of autobiography. The term “autobiography” was coined the late eighteenth century at the beginning of the Romantic period (Saunders 4), and the genre quickly rose to prominence among the Romantics, who attempted to follow the lead of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the fathers of Romanticism, and his *Confessions*. Writers like William Wordsworth in *The Prelude* and Thomas de Quincey in *Confessions of an English Opium Addict* tried to model the uncensored, stream-of-consciousness style of Rousseau’s “writing the self” that served as the Romantic ideal to varying degrees of success (41). Canto III of Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* has also been read as a form of autobiography that serves to establish Byron as a literary figure and further blurs the definition of the entire piece as a mix of fact and fiction (Treadwell 208). While other public figures also published autobiographies like the radical politician Samuel Bamford’s *Passages from the Life of a Radical*, the early form of the genre was used primarily by male Romantic writers to build an internal subjectivity that fit within their authorial persona (Wagner-Egelhaaf 1266). This use of autobiographies to build a public self meant that these pieces were often highly stylized and fit within the narratives already crafted by previous writing. More notable in the case of Anne Lister, however, is that autobiography was used primarily by male writers who had already laid a foundation for that public self in their earlier works, and thus women life writers often turned to other forms of life-writing.

Though there are examples of women publishing autobiographies like Mary Robinson’s *Memoirs*, more women in the genre chose to publish biographies of others, spiritual narratives, or their personal diaries. Biographies of others were popular among women writers to build writing skills to one day transition into other literary forms

without placing the focus on themselves, as women writers “still struggled with reservations about the egotism of writing their own story and the conflict between public disclosure and private reticence” (MacKay 164, 170). As with travel writing, women life writers had to compete with common beliefs that drew “a line between high (masculine) and low (feminine) culture” (Page 35). The dismissive attitude surrounding this line was focused primarily on women writing novels, but bled into beliefs surrounding other women writers, and thus women in life writing attempted to avoid the demeaning of their work through writing the lives of other writers, especially as the Romantic period waned to the rise of Victorian ideals. Within these biographies, some women writers were able to blend their own lives into those of their subjects, as Elizabeth Gaskell does in her biography of Charlotte Brontë by emphasizing their friendship and shared experiences (MacKay 165-166). This reflects a trend in nineteenth-century women’s autobiographical writing in which women often include their personal narratives into works with specific focuses that were not the authors themselves, and this saw the rise of the spiritual narrative early in the century (160-161). A third option also existed for women who wished to avoid the hurdles surrounding purely autobiographical writing, however, and that was the publication of diaries.

Diaries in the nineteenth century were a widely practiced form of record-keeping for literate women of all classes, and while most remained unpublished, it was not uncommon for collections to eventually be printed for wider consumption. Though men’s diaries were also published before and during the century, the nineteenth century saw the feminization of diaries beginning with their use in women’s novels (Steinitz 155-156). Novels in the Romantic period were already associated with women writers and

considered a lower form of art, and this connection only strengthened at the end of the period as writers like Mary Shelley and the Brontë sisters began incorporating diaries and letters into the structures of their novel (161-162). Surviving collections from the nineteenth century range from purely archival household records to private personal accounts. The latter form of diaries tended to be the preferred method of personal life-writing among women as the form “presents the unmediated reflection of a life without interpretation whilst autobiography overwrites a life already lived with knowledge of narrative closure” (Delafield, *Women’s Diaries* 15). These diaries offered a means for women to tell their stories in their own words with neither the editorial changes made in autobiographies nor the negative connotations of writing a persona-building autobiography. Diaries in particular appealed both writers and readers as “the sense of immediacy supplied ready-made drama, while chronological organization put uncomplicated demands on author/editor and reader alike” (MacKay 163). They appealed to the search for authenticity that defined Romantic writing ideals while also allowing women to participate in genre that protected them from gender-based attacks that surrounded the autobiographical form.

Despite serving a similar purpose in telling the author’s story, women’s diaries were not autobiographies by another name as the two genres inherently use opposing types of subjectivity. Autobiographies tend to use a stable masculine subjectivity while diaries used a fluid feminine subjectivity. The innate structure of diaries themselves varies significantly from autobiographies because while the author is the narrator, they are not always the central focus of the narrative. Their subjectivity changes from entry to entry depending on the circumstances in which the writers find themselves, and most

diarists tend to place more emphasis on archiving everyday life rather than establishing stable persona. While this is not a universal phenomenon nor does it always align with gender, subjectivity plays into how these different genres are read and the reception of their authors.

Subjectivity is also part of what makes Anne Lister's collection of diaries so notable as she often claims a masculine subjectivity within what was already a form that was already viewed as distinctly feminine. Not only is Lister's collection one of the longest surviving collections of life writing that is estimated to exceed four million words in the diaries alone, but within them, Lister uses her subjectivity to build a masculine persona in a feminine form. Like her travel writing, her diaries shift easily between masculine and feminine subjectivity, with purely archival or observational entries often running directly into sections in which she claims a stable subjectivity. However, where her travel writing maintains a balance between these styles, Lister's diaries favor a stable subjectivity, especially when she is writing in code. One of her shorter diary entries that shows this mixed style is from 22 May 1821: "Sat near an hour with Mrs. Waterhouse. Very civil & very glad to see me & *a thoroughly good woman, but I am out of my element here & must have other society in days to come*" (qtd. in Whitbread *The Secret Diaries* 168). In this very brief entry, Lister makes a subtle shift that refocuses the retelling of the event onto herself within the coded section, taking what is an insignificant event within her diaries and turning it into a statement on how she views herself within the event and her position within the social circles of Halifax. Throughout the majority of her diaries, Lister continues to use her uncoded sections for archival notes in which her

subjectivity is less stable and chooses instead to claim subjectivity in her coded sections, using the feminine form to build a masculine persona.

Even in coded sections in which Lister does not claim subjectivity in the entry, most of them relate directly to the masculine persona she constructed for herself. One of the subjects that Lister almost always codes in her diaries is anything relating to her clothing, even when it does not directly relate to her masculine fashion discussed in Chapter II. The first appearance of this coding in Whitbread's collections comes from 1816 in which she describes a package she received from Marianna: "She brought me a kind letter from Mrs H[arriet] S. B[elcombe] & one from M— (Lawton)²⁸ *with a couple of white muslin morning waists [a slip or underdress] made by M—*" (qtd. in *The Secret Diaries* 3). Another example from two years later is a single sentence entry in which she discusses mending clothes: "In the afternoon, *mending my black silk legs to which I tack cotton socks & wear under my boots*" (68). Aside from unkind remarks when recounting interactions with others, her clothing and appearance are among the most consistently coded subjects within her diaries, be it the mundane mentions cited above or her more explicit claims to masculinity in her clothing. One of these moments also occurs very early in Whitbread's collection in which she describes a morning of wearing her underclothes, a black waistcoat, and men's suspenders: "*Began this morning to sit, before breakfast, in my drawers put on with gentleman's braces I bought for 2/6 on 27 March 1809 & my old black waistcoat & dressing gown*" (qtd. in *The Secret Diaries* 9). This explicit queering of fashion through blending men's and women's clothing being coded

²⁸ Throughout her diaries, Lister almost always refers to Marianna as "M—."

in the same way as the mending of her stockings suggest that Lister recognized everything about her appearance as part of her subjectivity and masculine persona.

This becomes even more apparent when examining the only subject that is always coded in Lister's without exception: her sexuality. Whether it is a conversation with a woman she is courting or an explicitly sexual account, Lister's sexuality is always hidden behind her code, and she makes it clear throughout her diaries that her sexuality is part of her identity. One of the famous of her quotes is one such claim: "*Mr. Montagu's farewell verses that no trace of any man's admiration may remain. It is not meet for me. I love, & only love, the fairer sex & and thus beloved by them in turn, my heart revolts from any other love than theirs*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 161). In proclaiming her sexuality so explicitly despite lacking the specific language to identify it, Lister claims it as part of her subjectivity. It is a truth about herself that must be stated in plain language. Even when she is speaking to others who press her on whether or not she is going to marry, she explicitly says that she "*very much preferred ladies to gentlemen*" (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 9). Her insistence upon being recognized as a lover of women whether in her diaries or in conversation at a party shows that Lister viewed her sexuality as an integral part of her identity, one upon which she would not compromise even in a public setting. Despite this security in her identity, however, all discussions of her sexuality along with most of her claims of a masculine subjectivity still sit behind her code, and this fact suggests that Lister recognizes to some degree that the persona she was constructing within her diaries falls outside of social norms and should thus be hidden.

However, Lister herself does not seem to see this code as hiding, but rather as a means to control her audience among whom she is building her subjectivity. Lister widely circulated the key to her code among her many lovers with the intention that she and they could communicate through the code (Rowanchild, “Anne Lister” 202). This created a secret language that tied a group of primarily queer women together in their ability to access Lister’s diaries. Though few of these women ever meet each other face to face, Lister’s purposeful distribution of this code suggests that she is building a kind of audience for her diaries who would recognize the queerness inherent in the coded sections and the subjectivity that they contain in a similar way that Lister recognized Lord Byron and the Ladies of Llangollen. The fact access to Lister’s coded sections was given exclusively to other queer women suggests that Lister did not see her sexuality and subjectivity as something to be hidden but rather as something inherently and recognizably queer.

The same can be said of all of Anne Lister’s writings. Her movement between masculine and feminine writing styles is a reflection of the same gender fluidity that Lister claimed in every facet of her life, creating a narrative in which she is able to balance the extreme detail that makes her writings important to historical studies and her position as the undisputed protagonist of that narrative. Even when she is working with genres like travel writing, she is queering them through her use of subjectivity. In going back and forth between masculine active and feminine passive writing styles, Lister’s travel writing maintains a balance between the detailed descriptions that fascinated readers of women writers and the stable subjectivity that gave male writers like Byron a defined role within the narrative. In building a border behind which she claimed a

masculine persona in what was viewed as a feminine and domestic medium, Lister created an inherently queer space within her writing that was then made accessible to other queer people. In all of her work, Lister forges a middle ground between genres and gendered writing styles that is uniquely her own in which she is able to go into the extensive detail that is inherent within all of her writing without sacrificing the identity that she spent so much time and effort shaping and claiming within her personal life.

In an 1821 entry, Anne Lister wrote: “I owe a good deal to this journal. By unburdening my mind on paper I feel, as it were, in some degree to get rid of it; it seems made over to a friend that hears it patiently, keeps it faithfully, and by never forgetting anything, is always ready to compare the past & present & and thus to edify the future” (qtd. in Whitbread, *The Secret Diaries* 171). By the end of her life, her diaries were more than a friend or a “memorial”; they were an unfiltered representation of herself, something for which Romantic writers strived and rarely found. Now that representation serves as a queer lens into the period. Anne Lister did not just use Romantic ideas of subjectivity and writing the self to craft literature but to claim an identity that will outlive her for many years to come.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Anne Lister is an enigmatic figure of history. Through her existing diaries, she is incredibly well-documented, but due to her code and the sheer abundance of them, well over half of those diaries have not been read except by a handful of dedicated scholars. In what is available of her work, she often contradicts herself in her beliefs and even in her carefully constructed identity that has been examined in this study and several others before it. She is a complicated part of queer history with debates surrounding the contradictory parts of her identity, including her sexuality and her gender. This is further complicated by the ruthlessness and callousness she often recounts in her diaries. As Jill Liddington noted at the end of one of her Lister collections, “Few readers will reach the end of this narrative without murmuring to themselves, ‘She wasn’t very nice, was she?’” (*Female Fortunes*, 242), and that lack of niceness makes her a hard historical figure to claim no matter the strides she represents for queer and women’s history.²⁹

Despite these complications—or, as I would argue, because of them—Lister is a fascinating figure to examine through a Romantic lens. Romanticism and the writers who built the tradition are often directly connected to broad concepts including imagination, spontaneity, and authenticity among plenty of others. These concepts are often used to frame works and writers of the period, and sometimes that framing leads to an oversimplification of the period. In *The Romantic Ideology*, Jerome McGann stresses that

²⁹ It is important to note here that the instinct to reject Lister due to her lack of niceness is one rooted in historical misogyny and the belief that women are meant to be nice. The historical context of this is explored by Sara Ahmed in her article, “Feminist Killjoys (And Other Willful Subjects).” For more information on “niceness” as a standard for women as historical figures, see Bramen, McKeon, and Sommers.

Romanticism and these broad concepts like nature and spontaneity around which it is built are and should be studied as ideologies. These ideologies, McGann argues, must be critically examined through a historical lens as they are historicized through the art created around them (11-12). Lister, through her contradictions, serves as a kind of historical context as she uses Romantic ideologies very practically throughout her life. Where Romantic writers often proclaimed these broad Romantic ideologies in their writing, in reality, they often contradicted them. William Wordsworth regularly edited and republished his poems in spite of his belief in the spontaneous artist. Samuel Coleridge dedicated several of his early works to revolutions for an ideal of freedom, but later denounced democratic movements. Lord Byron identified himself as a student of Alexander Pope despite the period's rejection of Pope's work and the neoclassical poetic style as a whole. Romantic writers were often contradictory to the ideology of Romanticism. Lister uses this to her advantage by inhabiting the paradoxical beliefs of Romanticism, and in the process manages to queer Romanticism. It is within these contradictory beliefs of Romanticism that Lister's writing and the identity she forms within it begin to make sense.

In using Romantic ideals to build her public persona, Lister used the contradictory nature of Romanticism to her advantage. Masculinity in women was gradually becoming controversial in the new century; however, when it was translated through the image of the Georgian gentleman, masculinity brought with it a form of respectability. This was then furthered by Lister's use of Byron as a model for her gentleman persona. As a recognizable figure who bent social norms without breaking most of them, Byron becomes a perfect model for Lister in her attempts to navigate the British upper class as a

woman wielding power. In the process, however, she does more than just adapt Byron; she queers Byron. Though Byron himself sat somewhere on the historical spectrum of homosexuality, his Byronic persona was often used to solidify his Romantic masculinity, and part of that was reaffirming his interest in women despite his interest in men. Lister, however, uses her Byronic persona to reaffirm her queerest identities, her female masculinity and her homosexuality. Through this process of queering Byron, Lister queers a masculine form of Romanticism to translate her identity in a way that destabilizes its original purpose.

Lister continues this process of queering Romanticism through her relationship with the Ladies of Llangollen. The Ladies' relationship was seen by Romantic writers as a paradigm of virtue, and Lister also views them as such, but she does so by acknowledging the queerness of their relationship. Where the Romantics valued the Ladies as an ideal example of friendship, Lister considers their relationship an ideal marriage, one that she will spend the rest of her life trying to replicate in her own relationships. In doing so, she seems to have inspired Emily Brontë to also queer Romanticism through her representation of Lister and creation of characters that were so undeniably queer to an early Victorian England that they were almost erased in wake of their creator's death. Lister's unknowing participation in this literary tradition of representing queer women highlights an important shift in British society's view of queer women and the waning of Romanticism's ambiguous interpretations of queerness in general towards the end of the period.

More importantly than her interactions with the figures of Romanticism is Lister's queering of Romantic genres and styles within her own writing. Through her

destabilizing and restabilizing of subjectivity in her life and travel writing, Lister takes traditionally gendered genres and upends them to reflect her own use of masculinity. As a traveler, she balances masculinity and femininity by easily moving between forms of subjectivity, at times placing the focus solely on herself and other times turning that focus outward in a show of feminine fluidity. In her diaries, Lister continues the gender and genre bending by using a feminine genre to claim masculine subjectivity, and this is furthered by her claim to an audience through her use and circulation of her code. In addition to this bending, Lister, through her diaries, attains a level of authenticity that was not often achievable within the more masculine form of the autobiography. Despite her diligently planned process of keeping her diary, Lister's persona meets her audience without the filter of editing. Even with her meticulous construction of her identity, the Lister that is represented in her diaries is inherently closer to the authentic genius of Romanticism than Wordsworth's *The Prelude* or Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as she rarely has the thought let alone time to edit it.

In a way, Lister's queering of Romanticism is what ties her closest to the literary tradition. In her process of queering the writers, works, figures, and genres of the period, Lister blurs the lines of society in a way that Romantic writers did throughout their writing. Instead of explicitly using nature to do so, Lister uses her sexuality and gender to press back and overcome the structures that were meant to inhibit her. Because of this explicit use of Romanticism, Lister exemplifies a practicality to Romanticism that simply was not necessary for major writers of the period, and that was the use of its ideals for survival. For Anne Lister, Romantic ideas are not just part of a literary movement in which she can one day write and publish; they are a means to translate her identity, to

build a community, and to preserve her identity in a time in which there were few other ways to do so.

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- Youngs, Tim. "Introduction." *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth-Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, edited by Tim Youngs, pp. 1-18. Anthem Press, 2006.

VITA

Michelina R. Olivieri

EDUCATION

M.A., English, 2021, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

B.A., English, Summa Cum Laude, 2019, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

RESEARCH

M.A. Thesis

The Closet Romantic: Anne Lister's Use of and Contributions to British Romanticism

Areas of Focus

- British Romantic literature; gender and sexuality studies; queer theory; New Historicism.

PUBLICATIONS

Olivieri, Michelina. "Living in the Space Between: Finding the Modern Fight for LGBT+ Equality in Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*." *The Measure: A Journal of Undergraduate Research*, Fall, 2018.

---. "Building with a Vision: Anne Lister's Use of Lord Byron in Her Construction of Public and Personal Identities." *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830*, 2021. (Accepted with revisions)

PRESENTATIONS

Olivieri, Michelina. "'Emily took her for a man': Anne Lister and the Brontës." *Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, expected Oct. 2021.

---. "Something Torn and New: Caribbean Writers' Opposing Views of a Postcolonial Caribbean." *Conversations on Race Conference*, Huntsville, TX, 27 Oct. 2020.

---. "Building with a Vision: Anne Lister's Use of Lord Byron in Her Construction of Public and Personal Identities." *18th- and 19th-Century British Women Writers Conference*, Fort Worth, TX, 7 Mar. 2020.

---. "Don't Call Her Dead: How Queer Women's Stories are Erased in Film Adaptations of Novels." *Society for Comparative Literature and Arts*, Atlanta, GA, 1 Nov. 2019.

---. "Queering the Romantics: Anne Lister's Diaries." *Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, El Paso, TX, 11 Oct. 2019.

---. "A somewhat remarkable person in uncommon times": Representations of Joseph Nadin, Deputy Constable of Manchester at the Massacre of Peterloo."

International Conference on Romanticism, Manchester, UK, 31 July 2019.

---. "When Monsters Leave the Closet: Finding the Modern Fight for LGBTQ+ Equality in Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*." *Society for Comparative Literature and Arts*, The Woodlands, TX, Oct. 2018.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, Boulder, Colorado, 2021

- Romanticism Panel Chair

Conversations on Race, Huntsville, Texas, 2020

- Conference Organizer

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, British Romanticism, Fall 2020

Teaching Assistant, Later English Masterworks, Fall 2020

Teaching Assistant, World Literature II, Fall 2020

Teaching Assistant, Composition II, Summer 2020

Teaching Assistant, World Literature II, Spring 2020

Teaching Assistant, Composition II, Fall 2019

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Fall 2019-Spring 2020

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND GRANTS

Summer Graduate Bearkat Grant, Sam Houston State University, 2020

CARES Summer 2020 Scholarship, Sam Houston State University, 2020

President's Honor Roll, Sam Houston State University

- *Awarded in Spring 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Spring 2018, and Fall 2017 for maintaining a GPA of 4.0.*

Dean's List of Academic Honors, Sam Houston State University

- *Awarded Spring 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Fall 2018, Spring 2018, and Fall 2017 for maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher.*

EUREKA Travel Grant, Sam Houston State University, Summer 2019

SPUR Travel Grant, Sam Houston State University, Summer 2019

English Department Travel Grant, Sam Houston State University, Summer 2019

Summa Cum Laude, Sam Houston State University, Spring 2019

- *Graduated with 3.95 GPA.*

Academic Excellence Award, Lone Star Community College, Spring 2017

Leadership Excellence Award, Lone Star Community College, Spring 2017

Honors College General Scholarship, Lone Star Community College

Men's Club Scholarship, St. Mary Catholic Church, 2015

SERVICE AND PARTICIPATION

Sigma Tau Delta, Sam Houston State University Chapter

- *2019-2020: Served as vice president of the chapter.*
- *2018-2019: Joined as an undergraduate.*

Writer's Guild, Sam Houston State University

Can You Hear Me Now?: Student Forum with Congressman Michael McCaul, 2017

- *Event Organizer*

Honors College, Lone Star Community College

MEMBERSHIPS

The Brontë Society

- *Member since 2021*

North American Society for the Study of Romanticism

- *Member since 2020*

British Women Writers Associations

- *Member since 2019*

Rocky Mountain Modern Language Society

- *Member since 2019*

International Conference on Romanticism

- *Member since 2019*

The Byron Society

- *Member since 2019*

Society for Comparative Literature and Arts

- *Member since 2018*